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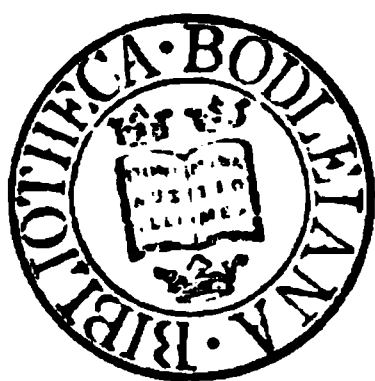
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Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives

JERUSALEM
FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

Painted by J. K. Kneass

Published by J. K. Kneass, New York, N.Y.

A PILGRIMAGE
TO
P A L E S T I N E,
EGYPT, AND SYRIA,

BY
MARIE-JOSEPH DE GERAMB,
MONK OF LA TRAPPE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
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1840.

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LONDON :
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P R E F A C E.

SOME days had elapsed since the events of July, 1830. Peaceful monks were engaged in the labours of agriculture, singing the praises of the Lord, sharing what they had with the poor, and incessantly praying for the happiness and prosperity of France. The news of the day never came to interrupt the silence of death to which they had devoted themselves. The monastery of Notre Dame de la Trappe du Mont des Olives, situated near Mühlhausen in Alsace, was an establishment which deserved to be protected. It was not. Still it is our duty to declare, and we have great pleasure in publishing that, so far was the government from sharing the violence of our enemies, that it bestowed, and still continues to bestow, marks of kindness on us, as a peaceable and inoffensive institution. As for the people of the environs, in general eminently pious, they were not content with lavishing upon us the most touching proofs of

interest: they also came forward most zealously to guard our monastery in the night, lest it might be set on fire.

I accuse nobody. I throw myself at the feet of Jesus Christ, and beseech him in his infinite mercy to open the eyes of those who were our persecutors, and to forgive as we forgive them.

Our church was shut up. We were obliged to relinquish our monastic habit, and all the monks who were not Frenchmen received orders to leave France. We, landed proprietors, who had adopted France for our country, who took no concern in public events, who knew nothing about them, and were absolutely ignorant of all that was passing beyond our own walls, obeying the laws, paying our contributions, submissive to the new government as to the old, feeding the poor with the fruit of our labours, were driven from our asylum by persons without right and without authority. The sick, the infirm, all, without exception, were obliged to depart. Order was not yet established.

A monastery of Trappist nuns shared the same fate. Never shall I forget the day and hour when the doors of that monastery were thrown open. I behold its scared inmates issuing from the sanctuary where their hearts had found rest; I see them watering with their tears the soil from which they were so cruelly driven. One young nun was borne on a bier by four sisters: she

expired a few paces from the sacred asylum ! Her bed of dust was soon surrounded by a concourse of persons, who came to visit the grave of the young martyr.

To return to the world after being separated from it for sixteen years would have been heart-rending. I asked and obtained permission of my superiors to write to the abbot of St. Urban, to inquire whether he would have the kindness to admit me till happier times into that celebrated abbey of St. Bernard, in the canton of Lucern. That worthy prelate acceded to my request with that charity which characterises him, which gains him all hearts, and which extends far beyond the circuit of his abbey.

I frequently visited our communities scattered among the mountains of Helvetia ; I was even obliged to sojourn for a considerable time at Solothurn and Berne, for the purpose of interesting those cantons in our favour.

At St. Urban I heard of those profanations which have for some time sullied France. My soul was plunged into deep affliction. Often did I prostrate myself before God to implore his grace and forgiveness. Alas ! the crosses were thrown down ; the sacred emblem of our redemption was dragged in the mud !

I was ill at Solothurn, worse at St. Urban, and very ill indeed at Berne. Seeing that our reunion into a community became a matter of greater difficulty from

day to day, I asked leave of my superiors to make a pilgrimage to Palestine, which they granted. I then applied to Monseigneur d'Angelis, the nuncio of the Holy See in Switzerland, in order to obtain through him the approbation of his Holiness, his blessing, and letters of recommendation from the sacred Propaganda. His Holiness granted me all that I desired with the most touching kindness, and I made preparations for my journey.

The letters here offered to the public were written by a Trappist monk, poor in spirit, poor in human knowledge. He undertook this pilgrimage to the Holy Land merely to pray, to adore, and to do penance.

My work is not destined for that class of people of the world whom such a book as this cannot please, unless charms of style, purity and elegance of language, grace and pomp in the descriptions and delineations, enhance its merit. What interest of this sort could I pretend to excite after writers like Messrs. de Chateaubriand, Michaud, Poujoulat, and de Lamartine, whose names form so fair a portion of the literary glory of France? My letters are addressed principally to that class of readers, who do not require Truth to be shown to them tricked out with all the ornaments by which she can be embellished. They are addressed more especially to those simple and pious readers whose hearts one is sure to satisfy, when, while reminding them of all that

Christ has done for us, while guiding them, as it were, into his footsteps, one presents to them new motives for admiring, for adoring his infinite goodness, for loving and practising his religion, and for attaching themselves to him as to the only Saviour.

Once more, then, I went to Palestine, only to adore, to weep, and to pray. I purposed not to measure the sacred monuments with the compasses of incredulity : plenty of travellers have taken that task upon themselves. Most of them hurry through Palestine with such speed, that their imagination is obliged to supply what has escaped their fugitive observation. In spite, however, of that spirit of the age, which makes them write with such levity of monuments so venerable, their hearts are not unmoved. Religion will assert her rights. Their hearts have throbbed while they were ascending Calvary ; when they beheld the ensanguined rock on which the Saviour of the world yielded his last breath to reconcile Earth with Heaven ; when they visited that sacred tomb, which his victorious foot has overstepped. But this emotion of heart soon subsided : the mind took up the pen which pride presented to it.

I wrote these letters amid the scorching sands of the desert, on the tops of arid mountains, on board a ship tossed by the waves, beneath a tent, upon a dromedary, in a grotto, stretched in a cell upon a bed of pain ; but I think that I have never lost sight of the presence

of my God : I have always striven to make known His love to men, and to kindle in their hearts the love of Him.

I have seen Bethlehem and Calvary, Nazareth and the unbelieving city ; I have travelled those now desolate routes where the Son of Man strewed so many favours and relieved so many afflictions. Seated on the scattered stones of the sanctuary, kneeling in the Stable at Bethlehem, humbly prostrate in the Tomb of our Saviour, I have noted down the diverse and multiplied emotions with which my soul was filled. Amid those mighty ruins, piled up here and there by the hand of Providence, the prophetic words of Isaiah and Jeremiah seemed still to ring in my ears ; and more than once my tears flowed at these religious recollections. Then did I think of the fair land of France, and implore the mercy of God in behalf of that country, in places that remain everlasting witnesses of his severe justice.

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PILGRIMAGE

TO

JERUSALEM AND MOUNT SINAI.

LETTER I.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MY DEPARTURE.

Abbey of St. Urban, June 23rd, 1831.

I AM setting out at last, my dear friend. I shall start to-morrow, notwithstanding my precarious health, notwithstanding the dangers of which your friendship for me causes you so much apprehension. At three in the morning I shall commence my happy pilgrimage. I must confess that, at my age, scarcely recovered from a serious illness, the plague which is ravaging the countries that I am going to visit, and the troubles prevailing there, would be enough to intimidate me if I were running after the perishable riches of this world. But, of what account are the scorching skies of Asia and Africa, contagious diseases, my infirmities, and the calamities which inundate this vale of tears! Nay, I already feel happy

in the prospect of the sufferings and perils that await me. I say to myself, my right hand upon my heart and my eyes uplifted to heaven : I am going to visit the holy places — that is the object of my journey ; I am going to weep over the tomb of Jesus Christ ; the paternal hand of my God will lead me to the term to which his love is calling me.

Pray for me ; adieu !

LETTER II.

CEREMONY IN THE CHURCH OF ST. URBAN — DEPARTURE — ARRIVAL
AT LUCERNE.

Lucerne, June 25th, 1831.

Here I am at Lucerne, my dear friend. I shall stay here but three or four days ; I shall then embark on its enchanting lake for Altorf ; I shall cross the Gothard, and proceed as expeditiously as possible to Venice, and perhaps to Trieste, where I hope to find some vessel bound to Alexandria or the island of Cyprus.

An affecting custom prevails in our Order. When a member of it is leaving the monastery upon a long journey, he goes and falls prostrate upon his face in the church, and the assembled community pray aloud that the blessing of the Lord may attend him. I was to set out very early ; I requested the abbot to permit those prayers, which I so ardently desired, to be said after complins : he complied. Never did service appear to me more solemn ; never in our sacred hymns had I raised my voice to Heaven with deeper emotion, or sent up with more fervour the expression of my love and my gratitude

to the foot of the throne of the Almighty. The *Salve*, which finishes complins, being over, I descended from my stall and prostrated myself. O God ! thou knowest what were the feelings of thy poor servant, when all his brethren joined in earnest prayer to thine infinite mercy to bless and to protect him !

I was moved to tears ; with the sighs heaved by my oppressed heart were wafted the most fervent prayers for the prosperity of the monastery that I was leaving. I besought more especially the God of mercy to bless my pilgrimage, to give me the grace to fulfil the object of it in such manner as should be agreeable to Him, and to preserve me from every act, every thought, that could displease him. I walked in the morning, perhaps for the last time, through the majestic cloisters of St. Urban. My whole being was thrilled with deep emotion. One of the brotherhood advanced towards me ; it was the reverend father abbot, who was going to the church. I durst not speak to him ; it was forbidden by our rules : but at such moments how necessary it is to speak ! I threw myself at the feet of the virtuous prelate ; I had need of a fresh benediction : he pressed me long to his bosom, and I felt the tears that trickled from his eyes fall upon my cheeks.

LETTER III.

ILLNESS—FEDERAL DIET—M. LUTZ.

Lucerne, July 2nd.

I was to have set out yesterday ; the boat was ready ; and the people were carrying my things on board, when

a violent fever seized and threw me upon a bed of pain.

July 6th.

The fever continues : it has made me very weak.

The federal diet meets this year in this city. The diplomatic body is here. The kind and amiable Count Louis de Bombelles, our worthy ambassador, whom I have the honour to be long acquainted with, bestows upon me the marks of the kindest interest : at his request, M. de Lutz, of Berne, physician in chief of the federal army, is attending me. He is eminent in his profession. But I cannot help saying that I suffer a great deal.

July 12th.

The diet has to-day opened its session. I had received several tickets for the ceremony, which is rather curious, on account of the singular dresses of the ushers. But, though it was the day on which the fever leaves me a little ease, I did not comply with the invitation. Ah ! what to a monk, above all to a monk of La Trappe, a pilgrim to the Holy Land, are all the vain ceremonies of the world !

LETTER IV.

EXECUTION OF A CRIMINAL FOR MURDER—CUSTOM AT LUCERNE IN REGARD TO CRIMINALS WHO WILL NOT CONFESS THEIR GUILT—SHOCKING INSTANCE OF THIS KIND.

Lucerne, July 20th.

There is in the prison of this town a man sentenced to die for murder : he is to be executed on Saturday. I wrote to the minister of Lucerne, requesting permission

to spend the last night with this unhappy man, and to accompany him to the place of execution. The worthy pastor called to see me, and told me that it is not customary to pass the night with a condemned criminal ; that the man, for whom I wished to perform this act of charity, would receive the sacrament at six o'clock in the evening of the day before the execution ; that next morning, at five o'clock, the ecclesiastics would repair to the prison ; and that, if I chose to join the sad train, I could go with them to that scene of misery and tears.

The culprit had appeared to receive some consolation on learning that a monk of La Trappe would accompany him in his last moments ; but I thought it right to consult on this point the canons, Widmer and Geiger, who, with great piety, combine virtue, intelligence, and an intimate acquaintance with the customs of the country. A few hours before the execution, I received the following letter from canon Geiger :—

“ Very reverend Father,

“ I have just spoken with canon Widmer, and our opinion is this :—If you accompany the criminal, you will present a new object of curiosity to the whole population ; all eyes will be directed to you and your monastic habit ; of course attention will be diverted from the unhappy criminal, for whom all that population is now praying in silence. You mean to do good ; you would perhaps do harm.”

I felt it to be my duty to follow, without hesitation, the pious advice of these worthy ecclesiastics. Still I was somewhat mortified that I could not afford the culprit that consolation which he appeared to wish for.

He was conducted to the place of execution; on reaching the scaffold, he was blindfolded; from the top of the scaffold the minister of the town delivered an address to the people. The criminal was within hearing of part of it, and the fatal stroke fell upon his resigned head.

There prevails at Lucerne a very extraordinary custom, a custom that makes one shudder, and that exists nowhere else. The law directs that sentence of death shall not be pronounced upon any who have not confessed their crime. Convicted criminals, from whom no confession can be obtained, are punished with hard labour only. But what a horrible condition is tacked to the miserable life which is left them! At the next execution, the last condemned criminal is compelled to repair to the spot where the scaffold is erected, to catch the head as it falls, and to carry it to the grave in the presence of the whole population. Some months ago, an unfortunate young woman was convicted of infanticide, and executed. Her wretched accomplice, condemned only to forced labour, because he would not confess his crime, was therefore obliged, as the last person condemned, to take the head of her whom he had loved, whom he had seduced, whom he had ruined. At the sight of that pale and livid head, of that blood-stained hair, he started back in horror and affright. In vain he refused to obey; the application of the whip forced him to perform the task imposed by the law. Base and contemptible spirit! he should have prayed to God for pardon, have confessed his crime, and died.

LETTER V.

DISINTERESTED CONDUCT OF M. LUTZ—CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

Lucerne, August 17th, 1831.

Since I last wrote to you, my dear friend, I have been very ill : God tries me, but he supports me. With a burning fever is coupled a complaint in the eyes, which renders me nearly blind. The loss of sight, for a resigned Christian, facilitates inward devotion, keeps aloof from him a multitude of objects which might distract his attention : his spirit beholds God, beholds itself ; in this contemplation it finds happiness. O my God ! thy blessed will be done ! To be sure, thou hast said to my heart that I shall soon see again. I have read somewhere that atheism, combined with loss of sight, is the last degree of misfortune, and certainly imagination cannot conceive of any thing worse.

Though extremely weak, I have been mending for some days past, and I am firmly resolved to pursue my journey.

I cannot give you an idea of all the kindness, of all the charitable attentions, of which I have been the object during my illness. M. Lutz, after attending me with a zeal and assiduity worthy of all my gratitude, has crowned his benevolence by the most generous disinterestedness. When addressing to him my acknowledgments, I had thought it right to send him some money. "I am the physician of Berne, and not of Lucerne," he replied, "and I cannot receive any fee.

I am amply repaid for the attentions which I have had it in my power to pay by the happiness of having made your acquaintance." These few words are sufficient to delineate the heart of this celebrated physician, whose skill is set off by a delicacy of sentiments which is daily becoming more rare. I had the satisfaction to prevail upon him to accept a trifling article which had belonged to me.

Would that I could tell you, too, all that I feel for those kind, those excellent, creatures, with whom I sought an asylum ! No, christian couple, never shall I forget you ! on the banks of the Jordan, of the Lake of Tiberias, of the Dead Sea, of the Nile, as on the shores of the Lake of Lucerne, your image will always be present to my mind, and deeply engraven on my heart. Worthy Lucia B——, thou wilt be ever present with me, dressing my wound, and bathing my eye deprived of sight. And thou, too, her husband, my dear and venerable friend, who hast rendered to thy suffering guest all the services of a perfect charity, never, no never shall I forget thee ! And to whom am I indebted for these services ? To poor people, actuated by the prospect of gain, by the hope of recompence ? No, to wealthy but christian people, who know that the services rendered to our neighbour are recorded in heaven ; to people who love God, who serve him with simplicity and fervour, and who behold Jesus Christ in every suffering fellow-creature. .

I must also make mention to you, my dear friend, of a beloved family which has heaped kindness upon me during my illness ; which, during the paroxysms of my fever, wiped the hot perspiration from my brow, and

gave me proofs of the most sincere attachment. Jules, Augustine, Hermine, and Marie de F——, never shall I forget you!

LETTER VI.

DEPARTURE FROM LUCERNE—THE LAKE—HILL OF GRÜTLI—CHAPEL
BUILT ON THE SPOT WHERE WILLIAM TELL ESCAPED FROM HIS GUARDS
—WALTER FURST, ARNOLD MELCHTHAL, AND WERNER STAUFFACHER.

Altorf, August 25th, 1831.

At length I have bidden adieu to Lucerne, and, to avoid eight or ten hours' navigation, which might have been attended with some danger in my state of convalescence, I resolved to take a carriage to Fluelen, and there I embarked. Oh! what a lovely day! what a magnificent lake is that of Lucerne, and how sorry I am that my illness prevented me from visiting in detail its enchanting shore! I determined, however, to cross it from Fluelen to Altorf. I wanted to see, to feel, to admire. Is not Nature an exquisite prayer-book? How much is he to be pitied who does not perceive God in the beauties which, with lavish hand, he has scattered over this wide world!

I visited the spot memorable in the annals of Switzerland, that hill of Grütli, where three courageous men conceived the design of liberating their country. I saw the place where William Tell escaped from the custody of his oppressors. A chapel is erected on that spot; there, mass is performed every year on the anniversary of his deliverance. The walls of the chapel are covered with wretched paintings, representing the oath of Grütli,

and the different events of that period. I contemplated these pictures, and I said to myself, with a deep sigh : What crimes have been brought into the world by the abuse of that word *liberty* ! what tears, what blood, has it caused to be shed ! what calamities will it yet occasion !

Walter Furst, Arnold Melchthal, and Werner Stauffacher, ye who with noble heroism sacrificed yourselves for the happiness and the salvation of your country, could I have called forth your shades, could I, unfolding before you the history of the five centuries that have elapsed since ye were no more, have shown you all the calamities which ambitious men have brought upon the earth by profaning the sacred name of *liberty*, seized with horror, fain would ye have been to sink again into your graves.

LETTER VII.

MOUNT GOTHARD ; NEW ROAD OVER IT—AIROLO—MAGADINO—STEAM-VESSEL—LAGO MAGGIORE—RECOLLECTIONS—COLOSSAL STATUE OF ST. CHARLES BORROMEO—CREW OF THE STEAMER—MILAN—ITS CATHEDRAL—HUNGARIAN SOLDIERS—THE EMPEROR FRANCIS—PIETY OF THE AUSTRIAN SOLDIERS—LIEUTENANT-GENERAL BARON DE GERAMB.

Milan, August 27th.

I have crossed the Gothard. That new road is truly worthy of the Romans. I tarried a considerable time on the most elevated point. The tops of mountains have in them something august, something religious ; there the thoughts are raised to divine things, and they invite man to contemplation and prayer. The wind roared ; I could scarcely keep my cloak about me. Elevated

above the clouds, I adored the Creator of the universe ; the world seemed at my feet, and I felt in my heart an impulse that hurried me on to other wonders, an impulse that transported me to the bosom of that God for whom my soul thirsted. Never had I been so powerfully, so deeply, moved. I cast a look over the land that I was about to quit, and where I was leaving so many beings dear to my heart, beings whom I thought it likely I might never see again ; I recommended them to that great God, the father of all mercies ; I prayed for you, ye brethren of my monastery, scattered over the mountains of Switzerland ; and for you, too, my children, who, notwithstanding so long an absence, were as present to me as when I took you from the arms of your mother to press you to my heart.

I arrived in the evening at Airolo, exhausted with fatigue—I was still so very weak. Next day, at Magadino, near Lake Maggiore, I resolved to embark in the steam-boat. Separated from the world for the last seventeen years, I knew nothing of steam-vessels, either from experience or report ; this trip, therefore, held out extraordinary attractions to me.

And here, my dear friend, I must reveal to you what was passing in my heart for a few moments, from which you will see what empire pride still had over me, though so long a monk of La Trappe. The steam-vessel is divided into two parts : the one, covered, is occupied by what are called people of respectability ; underneath is an apartment for their use ; the other part is open ; the room beneath, less commodious and less elegantly fitted up, is scarcely ever occupied by any but persons of the lower

class, or by those who wish to travel at a cheap rate. Well ! would you believe it ! never was I so perplexed as when I was asked in a loud voice, and before all the passengers, what place I would take. A little contest ensued between M. the Baron de Geramb and Father Marie Joseph. The Baron de Geramb strove to prove to Father Marie Joseph that every consideration imperatively required him to take his place in the first-mentioned division. He had a thousand reasons to adduce : in the first place, decency ; in the next, the danger of getting a *coup de soleil*, the cure of which would have been very expensive for one who had taken a vow of poverty ; and then cleanliness, which is also a virtue, &c. Father Marie Joseph alleged, on his part, that, having taken a vow of humility, he was glad to have this opportunity of expiating certain little reproaches to which he had exposed himself on this head. With the blessing of God, Father Marie Joseph got the better of the Baron.

How beautiful, how ravishing is the Lago Maggiore ! what recollections it awakened in my soul ! I had crossed it at the age of eighteen. I dreamt then of nothing but happiness ; an ocean of delight was outspread before my boiling imagination, for then I was surrounded by every thing that can confer happiness on earth. The future appeared to my view like an enchanted palace ; I saw no obstacle ; I wanted every thing, and fancied that I could obtain whatever I wanted. Now, seated obscurely in a corner of the vessel, I called to mind those days when, on the same lake, I perceived already the enchanting sky of Italy ; when I already felt that balmy air which so softly lulls the senses. Italy ! on thy soil

I had sought to drain the cup of all the pleasures ; now, a monk, and a penitent monk, I asked myself if I had then been truly happy. No, never had I tasted happiness ; a moment of intoxication and phrenzy does not confer it. I have been happy in the dungeon of Vincennes ; I have been happy in the monastery of La Trappe, on sackcloth and ashes : for then I had again found God. To appease my raging hunger, the world threw me but a crumb, and, to quench my thirst, it gave but an empoisoned beverage, which burned my entrails ; but in my captivity, in my retirement, God visited his wretched servant, and showed me an ocean of love ; all the powers of my soul were intoxicated, and learned what happiness was. O my God ! thou hast made us for thyself ; in thee alone can the heart find rest. What then does it care for gilded palaces or the gloomy walls of a prison.

On the shore of the lake, near a monastery, is seen the colossal statue of St. Charles Borromeo ; a monument which reminds travellers of a venerable prelate, for ever celebrated for his talents and his lofty virtues, and particularly for the immense charity with which he devoted himself as a victim for the welfare of the people committed to his care.

The crew of the steam-vessel are frightful fellows ; such, that in a long voyage, I never met with any who could be compared with them. They are neither Swiss nor Italians ; they are a mixture of coarse wretches, who excite horror by their costume, their rags, their greediness, and above all by their blasphemies. I could neither see nor hear them without a feeling of pain that

I am unable to describe : the most sacred names were incessantly upon their lips, associated with expressions the most sacrilegious and impure.

On my arrival at Milan, the first thing I did was to hasten to the cathedral, to pay to God the tribute of my deep adoration. It was late ; they were closing the doors, but at my request I was allowed a few moments.

How beautiful is that cathedral ! how imposing its architecture ! what profound sensations it excites ! How that majestic obscurity all at once imposes silence on earthly thoughts ! how it disposes to meditation and prayer ! — My soul was lifted up ; my heart was moved ; I felt myself penetrated with the presence of the great God, who, by the prodigy of his infinite goodness, has so far abased himself as to be pleased to reside on our altars, in order to place himself, as it were, within the reach of man. It seemed to me that he was there expressly for me, expressly to receive the homage of my repentance and of my love. Prostrate on the pavement, I repeated with religious reverence those words of the patriarch Jacob : “How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. Surely the Lord is in this place.” (Genesis, xxviii. 16, 17.)

During the short stay that I have made at Milan, I have passed long moments in this cathedral, and I have no need to say that they are the happiest.

Since my release from the castle of Vincennes, that is to say, for seventeen years, I had not seen any of our soldiers. I cannot describe to you the emotion that I felt when I met with some on the frontiers. These

were Hungarians. I talked to them about our country, about their campaigns, about the sovereign who governs them. Never could I pronounce his name but my heart thrilled and my eyes filled with tears. Often have I risked my life for that beloved sovereign ; I would still sacrifice it a thousand times. All his subjects would devote themselves in like manner ; for that august monarch is beloved because he is just ; I will say almost adored because he is full of kindness and beneficence, and because his heart is the sanctuary of virtue. The long years that he has reigned have appeared to us very short : may the Lord yet spare him long to his people !

I must acquaint you with another of my joys. The greatest pleasure that I experienced during my sojourn in Milan, was to see our soldiers come in crowds to the cathedral to worship the Lord of hosts. My heart throbbed on beholding these warriors on their knees before their God, praying with that devotion which draws down his favours and merits his blessings.

What a soothing and religious impression is produced in the soul by the aspect of that manly pride which fears not to bend humbly before our altars ! But what pain and pity does it excite to see the soldier, respectful sometimes even to servility before his superior or his king, daring to indulge in irreverence in the temple of the King of kings, of the Lord of lords !

I knew that my brother, the lieutenant-general, was at Milan. I had not seen him since I left the dungeon of Vincennes, when he was at Paris with the Austrian army. My illness had detained me two months at Lucerne ; I was apprehensive lest fraternal affection

should raise obstacles to the rapidity of my journey; I was anxious to reach Venice or Trieste as speedily as possible, for the purpose of embarking. I hesitated, therefore: I knew not whether I should go to see him. Alas! it is so sad to see one another for a moment, and then to part perhaps for ever. I could not, however, withstand the desire to press him to my heart. He looked at me—that kind brother—without being able to recognize my features. “It is indeed Ferdinand’s voice,” said he, “but I can scarcely persuade myself that it is he.” Seventeen years in the monastery of La Trappe had furrowed my brow with wrinkles, and stripped the hair from my head; but they had not changed my affection for him.

LETTER VIII.

VENICE—COUNT SPAUR, GOVERNOR OF THE VENETIAN PROVINCES—
ADMIRAL PAULUCCI—M. THEODOROVITCH.

Venice, September 4th.

I have been here for these two days, and to-morrow I shall embark for the island of Cyprus. It is a sort of miracle: I had the good fortune to meet with a ship that is still in quarantine, and I have arranged for my passage in her. I am still far from well. On my arrival, the mistress of the hotel where I am staying, perceiving that I was ill, sent for a doctor. I told him that I was setting out for the Holy Land; he supposed that I was delirious. Finding that I adhered to my purpose, he came no more. He is, it seems to me, of the same opinion as my Lucerne physician, who maintained that

it was utterly impossible for me to accomplish the undertaking.

A fresh misfortune : I have been so clumsy as to get a fall in the church of St. Mark, which is paved in mosaic, and I was so stunned by it as to be obliged to be carried senseless to the residence of one of the canons. All this is melancholy, to be sure ; but God is there, and my good angel accompanies me.

On recovering from my swoon, I hastened to present my letters of recommendation to his excellency Count de Spaur, governor of the Venetian provinces, and to Admiral Paulucci. They received me with that kindness which characterises them. Count de Spaur is justly venerated in his government ; he is a father, an example and an honour, to it. Admiral Paulucci reminds one of the brave Sir Sidney Smith ; in my opinion there is a resemblance between the two admirals. The commandant of the port, M. Peter Theodorovitch, rendered me all the services that depended upon him.

LETTER IX.

DEPARTURE FROM VENICE — LAZARETTO OF POVEGLIA — THE BRIG
ULYSSES—CONTRARY WIND—THE BUCENTAUR.

Lazaretto of Poveglia, September 6th, 1831.
on board the ship Ulysses.

I had so many things to do, my dear friend, during my stay at Venice, that I could not find a moment, when closing my letter, to bid you adieu, perhaps for a long time. I am on board the ship Ulysses ; she has not finished her quarantine, and is subject to all the

rigours of the sanitary laws. Since my embarkation I am myself considered as one infected with the plague. This letter will be taken up with pincers, and put into a tin box, and it will come to you stabbed, sprinkled with vinegar, and fumigated.

I left Venice at seven in the morning. The admiralty gondola came to my hotel to fetch me. The captain of the port had kindly caused such necessaries as I should want for the voyage to be purchased for me. I proceeded to the lazaretto, a short league from Venice, and then went on board the ship. The Austrian flag was hoisted on my approach. I was received by the captain, the mate, and the crew.

Before I quitted Venice, I went to the cathedral: the church was not yet open; twenty poor people were waiting at the gate. Being obliged to pray *afar off*, I called to mind the publican in the Gospel, and said like him: "Lord have mercy upon me, a sinner."

The wind has just shifted: it is directly contrary; we cannot weigh anchor, and the pilots cannot take us out of the channel.

Six in the evening.

The wind is still contrary. I am on deck, with the glass to my eye. Venice is before me; Venice, of yore, queen of the sea, now widowed and unmindful of her past glory, but still beautiful and superb notwithstanding her fall. One ought to read, in view of Venice, some of those funeral dirges of the prophets over Tyre and Sidon, queens too of old of the seas and of the nations.

We are nearly on the spot where, not long since, was

performed a magnificent ceremony, when the doge espoused the Adriatic Sea. The gilded Bucentaur conveyed the husband to his stormy consort, whose fidelity he thought to secure by throwing a ring into her bosom.

September 7th.

The wind is favourable for us, and I conclude. Adieu, my dear friend; when you receive this letter, I shall be far away from you. Adieu, adieu! Formerly that word produced within me a painful, a poignant feeling: now my heart has comprehended the signification of *adieu*: it is to God (*à Dieu*) that I commend you, that I commit you, and I am easy. And you too, my dear friend, you are saying to me adieu; and that word refreshes my heart, for you love me in God. Only, in case you should hear of my death in a foreign land, pray for me: the friendship of the Christian is eternal.

LETTER X.

DEPARTURE FROM THE CHANNEL—RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE—NATIVITY OF THE VIRGIN MARY—ILLNESS ON BOARD—A CALM—FALCON—CAPTAIN OF THE ULYSSES—TEMPESTUOUS WEATHER—REMINISCENCES OF LA TRAPPE—CORFU—ZANTE—CANDIA—NIGHTS ON DECK—DOVE—WAR BETWEEN THE TURKS AND GREEKS—RECIPROCAL CRUELITIES—ANECDOTE ON THIS SUBJECT—SUPERSTITION OF THE CAPTAIN—CHOLERA—THE AUSTRIAN CONSUL—FRANCISCAN CONVENT—LA MARINA—LARNACA—ISLAND OF CYPRUS—VISITANDINES—WAR BETWEEN THE VICEROY OF EGYPT AND THE PACHA OF ACRE.

Larnaca, Island of Cyprus,
October 15, 1831.

My dear friend, here you have, in the first place, my journal since our departure from Venice.

September 7th. The wind, as I told you in my last, having become favourable, we stood out of the channel.

Our crew consists of Captain Ragazzi, the mate, and ten sailors, including the cabin-boy, all Venetians. I perceived from the first moment a certain indifference for the observances of religion; there were no general prayers, so customary on board Italian vessels. The cabin-boy, however, cried in the evening: "Light the lamps, put out the fire, in the name of Jesus and his blessed Mother, our queen; may she conduct us safely into port! Health, liberty in this voyage, as well as in all those that we shall perform, God willing; a Pater and an Ave for the souls in purgatory, and for our prosperous voyage." The crew listened with respect, but that was all.

I bluntly made my remarks to the captain on this subject. He replied that, formerly, the Litanies were recited every evening; but that, having observed that one or two of his men had turned that practice into ridicule, he had given it up. I made him sensible that this was no reason for relinquishing so pious a custom, adding: "To-morrow, the anniversary of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, I will begin to read them till our arrival in Cyprus, and not a man shall dare to turn them into ridicule."

8th. I dressed myself early in my habit of the Order of La Trappe, and, though the weather was boisterous, I went upon deck. The seamen received me with joy. I then went and fetched an image of the Virgin, which I had noticed in the cabin; I fastened it to the main-mast. I had been strongly recommended to the captain;

he submitted with a very good grace to the removal, brought me a hammer and nails, and all passed off in the best possible manner. The Litanies were recited with decency and devotion, and the wind, which for some hours had been contrary, suddenly shifted about after prayers. The sailors immediately cried out:—"O father, father, the wind has changed!" I replied, smiling: "God never refuses any thing to his blessed mother." You must be aware, my dear friend, that I mean not to represent this event to you as something supernatural, as a miracle; but, at the same time, I must confess that confidence was in my heart.

9th. Two of the crew are ill: the mate and the cabin-boy. The fever is violent.

10th. We have three ill. I am in fear of an epidemic disease. The captain appears to be alarmed.

11th. Two of our patients are better. The weather is fine and the wind favourable.

12th. Calm. A falcon paid us a visit. The seamen considered the arrival of this bird as a bad omen.

It is evening; the fish are leaping about the ship: another bad omen, according to the sailors.—I laugh at them.

The captain is an excellent man, but one must get accustomed to his manners: he has some that are truly peculiar. In France, they would laugh at him; he is eccentric, nay, somewhat original. On the very first day, when I was reading my breviary in a low tone, he came behind me, and read, too, stammering, in the most natural way possible. I then shut my book, and put my fingers on my lips, to intimate that he ought to

be silent. This conduct surprised him much ; he went away somewhat nettled, and fell to singing the *Magnificat* and the *Te Deum*. If I have the pen in my hand, he comes with the utmost simplicity to read what I am writing ; if I make him stand back, he goes and opens and turns over my portfolio as innocently as possible, and without meaning any harm. I rap his knuckles, laughing, to make him understand that such behaviour is improper. He then leaves the portfolio, takes up a box of wafers, opens it, the wafers fly away, and he after them to pick them up, but, by the way, he meets with my spectacles. He claps them on his nose, though they are not suited to his sight, and seeks and brings me back, rubbed or broken, some of the wafers which his imprudence has scattered in the wind : he then asks me if my sight is bad In other respects, the captain is a good fellow, obliging, and even pious.

13th. The seamen were right : the weather is frightful ; every thing is rolling about in the ship. I am sitting on the deck, with my back against a cask, holding by a rope, and reciting my prayers as well as I can. — I am entirely covered by a wave. It was but a moment since I was repeating the words : *Ye seas and ye lightnings, bless the Lord !* This reminds me that once, at La Trappe, we were reciting the service of the Virgin, which service is always recited without light, and at these words : *Ye lightnings and clouds, bless the Lord !* a flash, accompanied with a loud clap of thunder, illuminated the church to such a degree that we could have fancied it was broad day.

How imposing is the spectacle presented by a ship

struggling at sea against all the elements ! How did man ever dare to trust himself to so frail a conveyance ! God had his designs ; he purposed to unite the people of the most distant countries. The sea, though often stormy and full of dangers, is become the bond of charity. Alas ! has not charity on land also its storms and its tempests !

11th. The weather continues.

15th. We have at length a fair wind. Be it what weather it will, I am constantly upon deck. I never go below to sleep for a few hours. How can one relinquish the sight of a starry firmament, of a moon reflected in the waves, upon a vessel that is cleaving the sea, to shut one's self up in a little wooden cage, where frequently one is stifled with the heat ! During the heaviest showers, the most boisterous gales, I keep my place upon deck, leaning against the mast, wrapped in my cloak. I admire the Lord in the torrent that inundates me, as I admired him on land in the dew-drop, which, at dawn of day, refreshed the flower of spring.

16th and 17th. Fair weather.

18th. We are passing Corfu ; on the 19th, Zante.

20th. We are in sight of Candia ; wind fair, and weather just such as we could wish.

Never shall I forget these nights which I passed in meditation on the deck of the Ulysses, lighted by the silvery rays of the orb of night, with my eyes fixed on that friend of the traveller, of the unfortunate, and of every tender-hearted being, whom I had learned to love from my childhood, who has always had indescribable charms for me, when she penetrated through

the gilded windows of the palaces of kings, as when in my captivity she visited me between the bars of the keep of Vincennes. What hours have I passed in contemplating her !

I meditated particularly upon the journey which God, in his mercy, permitted me to take. My heart throbbed. I should soon be in Palestine ; I was going to traverse that land thickly strewed with prodigies from the most remote ages, that fertile land where Jesus lifted up that divine voice which has given a new aspect to the world. Turning my thoughts to myself, I then asked : Who am I, to be thus favoured ? I am a sinner, and what sinner ? a sinner who, during the greatest part of his life, has offended, reviled his Creator, his benefactor, his father, and his God ; and this sinner is permitted to touch the ground over which the feet of the Saviour of the world have passed ! The lips of this sinner are about to kiss the manger, the sepulchre, and that blood-stained rock, where, in order to save the human race, the Son of man, the Love of Heaven, expired in excruciating torments ! I am going to see Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jordan, Mount Tabor, the Mount of Olives At this thought my heart burns with love and gratitude ; I sink upon my knees, and I adore the thrice good God.

21st and 22nd. The weather has been so fine and the wind so favourable that we have run nearly three hundred miles.

23rd. We are not so fortunate to-day. Assailed by a north-north-west wind, and met by a rough sea coming with fury from the Archipelago, our most experienced seamen know not what resources to call to their aid.

The wind roars among the rigging ; we have but one small sail left, and how easily that may be torn in pieces ! The waves dash with violence against our vessel. The Ulysses is become the object of their fury.

There is a saying that if the impious man learns to pray any where, it is at sea. This I can comprehend, especially in one of those awful nights, without any light save the frequent flash, when the cries of the sailors are blended with the roaring of the thunder and of the angry billows. Alarmed at his situation, the unbeliever, pale and trembling, looks up to Him who can alone succour and protect. Nature, whose voice is heard in this extremity, impels him to lift up his hands in prayer—an homage which the affrighted heart always pays to the God whom it had till then forgotten.

For my part, lying upon the deck, still indisposed, fastened by a rope that I might not be swept away by some wave, I said to myself : The hand of God is impressed every where : I shall have the happiness to visit the Holy Land : this happiness must be purchased by sufferings, privations, and dangers. God cannot give to his friends any other lot than he gave to his divine Son. The cross is the coin in which he pays here below those who comprehend and love Him.

Suppose, for a moment, my dear friend, the tomb of our Saviour to be near Paris. There is the Seine turned into the Jordan, Neuilly into Bethlehem, Fontainebleau into Nazareth, &c. Do you not see at once, as I do, a profane people treading disrespectfully that sacred ground, making it the theatre of their diversions, of their guilty pleasures ? Do you not hear the strange conversations

of the multitude, that language full of impiety, or at least of a levity not less sacrilegious, which, on the eve of a day devoted to rest by religion, are held by persons who nevertheless call themselves Christians: "We are going to-morrow by omnibus to Bethlehem; we shall go to the hotel of the Ambassadors, where you are sure of an excellent dinner; after dinner we shall go to the Manger, and we shall be back in time for the Opera"—nay, would not the irreverence, the scandal, go still further than I say, if the holy places were in France instead of being in Asia? No, no; this long peregrination full of dangers to reach the Holy Land—that Palestine in the hands of the infidels — that sacred sepulchre, guarded by feeble mortals at the peril of their lives — that Jordan, which cannot be approached without jeopardy — those scattered Christians who can only go with timid and trembling step to visit the tomb of their God: all this is marked with the seal of a God who was born in a stable, and died on a gibbet: he could do no other than surround the avenue to his birthplace and his grave with thorns and briars, privations and dangers.

24th. Still bad weather.

25th. The weather is more favourable, the ship still labouring. We have had since yesterday several charming visitors: pretty little birds, frightened by the bad weather, sought shelter in our ship; I remarked, in particular, a beautiful turtle-dove. The sailors would fain have caught it, but I was there to forbid them; and if it had been declared a good prize, I would have paid its ransom. The poor bird was a traveller, like ourselves; it had come to us in quest of an asylum: was it right

that it should make a meal for a sailor, who was not in want of any thing? A magistrate was expelled from Athens for having driven away a bird which took refuge in his bosom; he was a heathen, and there is something in the Christian heart that makes it feel compassion for all the beings created by its kind Maker. We had, however, on board, a treacherous animal, the symbol of hypocrisy; I never could like it. The sailors were fond of Rosso. It must be confessed that he was particularly clever at seizing with his claws the poor birds that came to us to demand hospitality. Early in the morning, I heard exclamations of joy; I thought that we had got sight of Cyprus. A sailor handed to me the bleeding wing of the poor dove: Rosso had made it his prey. Is the heart of a cat susceptible of remorse? Rosso never ~~durst~~ appear in my presence again.

26th. The weather is finer, the sea less agitated. I feel better, but the latitudes in which we are sailing awaken in my heart painful recollections. I see that war of extermination, that frightful struggle between the Turks and the Greeks—a war, marked on either side by acts of cruelty and horrors, from which the imagination turns away in disgust, and which the pen refuses to record. Many a time, in passing some island, the waves seemed to bring with them fragments of human flesh and palpitating limbs; and the wind, howling among the rigging, heightens the illusion. I listen, and fancy that I hear the cries, the moans, the sighs, of the victims.

One evening I was upon deck; I was conversing about this war, about this horrible carnage, with a person who had lived in the isle of Cyprus. He related to us

a fact confirmed by the captain and the whole crew of the *Ulysses*—a fact characteristic of those times of confusion and horror, when the thirst of blood provoked the thirst of blood. Unfortunately, the Greeks proved themselves quite as barbarous as the Turks. They were oppressed, it is true ; but to such a degree did they sully their cause, that we ask ourselves, in amazement, which was most atrocious, the Mussulman or the Christian.

The Greeks of the island of Cyprus had taken no part in the insurrection. They were required to deliver up their arms ; they gave them readily and submissively ; they did more, they carried to Coutsciouk-Mehemet, governor of the island, a present of one hundred thousand piastres, begging him to send it to the Sublime Porte, and to procure for them a firman, which, doing justice to their fidelity, might protect them from any vexation. That monster promised all they wished, and made them pay dearly for his promises. He called together several times the archbishop, the four bishops, and all the notables of the island ; he assured them most graciously that he had just despatched a Tatar to Constantinople, that he had written in their behalf to the Sultan, that he had supported their just demand with all his influence, that he would rather die than do them the least harm ; and, moreover, that he was certain that the Grand Signor would be favourable to them. The Tatar, however, did not come back with the firman. The archbishop, a man of extraordinary merit and superior understanding, who was acquainted with the villany of the governor, began to be alarmed. He went one day to Coutsciouk-Mehemet, and expressed his ap-

prehensions. "Be easy," replied the governor, "I swear by the Koran and the great prophet that the sword shall never touch thy neck. May Allah punish me if I forswear myself."

This oath cheered the archbishop. His fears, however, were but too well founded. In hopes of possessing himself of the property of the principal Greeks of the island of Cyprus, Coutsciouk-Mehemet had sent a report, the very reverse of what he had promised. He had described the Greek archbishop, bishops, and notables, as factious men, ready to rise against the Porte and to shake off the Ottoman yoke.

The Tatar at length returned from Constantinople. The governor sent word to the archbishop, the four bishops, and the ninety-three notables of the island, that he had received a firman which surpassed in clemency all that he could have hoped for, and he invited them to repair to Nicosia to hear it read. They went thither, not only without fear, but with joy. What was their surprise, their consternation, when the cruel Coutsciouk, appearing among them, read to them a firman, ordering them all to be put to death! How is it possible to describe this terrible scene! Some threw themselves on their knees, in a state of despair, calling upon Heaven to witness their innocence; others, fired with rage, called down vengeance upon such atrocious barbarity, unparalleled in the annals of nations; some uttered, in voices broken by sobs, the names of their wives and children, and commended themselves to the Father of mercies; others attempted to flee, but escape was impossible. The archbishop advanced towards the

perfidious governor, to reproach him with his crime, and to remind him of his oath. "I promised thee," replied the monster, "that the sword should not touch thy neck. I will keep my word; thou shalt be hanged." This was the signal for the carnage.

Seated on his divan, cross-legged, his pipe in his mouth, surrounded by his satellites, Coutsciouk-Mehemet coolly pointed out those who were to be the first victims, and laughed with his councillors at the sight of the anguish of those who awaited death. Many other Greeks were beheaded, their property confiscated, their wives and daughters imprisoned But I pause

Ought I here to place on record a thought, which, whenever I happen to be speaking of Greece, comes across my mind and saddens my heart? I know not; but it escapes me. The Greek nation, which has always excited such a strong interest, for which all other nations have made such sacrifices, never had it at heart to prove itself truly worthy of them: and in these latter times, when it had so fair a cause to defend, it knew not how to answer the expectations that were formed of it. No doubt there are in its bosom honourable exceptions; this, I cheerfully acknowledge, I can even myself attest; but those who form these exceptions are too few in number to prevent me from declaring that, in spite of the fanaticism, in spite of the aversion for the sciences, in spite of the despotism and the cruelty, of the Mussulman, I prefer a Turk to a Greek. For him who has studied the character of both nations, and has observed them closely, it is unnecessary to justify this preference.

27th. The captain of the *Ulysses*, as I have already

remarked, is an excellent man ; but he combines some superstition with his originality. Yesterday evening, he was in a particularly good humour. We were in sight of Cyprus ; the wind was most favourable, and we were advancing at a rapid rate. I went up to him and asked when we were likely to arrive at Larnaca, where we were to land, if the wind should continue as it then was. He gave me no answer ; I repeated my question ; he seemed vexed, looked black, and replied : “ It is wrong to ask such questions ; they bring ill luck.” I could not help smiling, but held my tongue. In the night, the wind became contrary ; I perceived it immediately. This morning, at dawn, when I went upon deck, the captain came to me, and said, with an angry look, turning at the same time towards this unlucky wind : “ That is your doing, father !” I had a good mind to answer like the idle schoolboy, whose master peevishly asked him : “ Who made the heavens and the earth ?” and who cried out, all in tears : “ I did, I did ; but will I never do so any more.” The contrary wind continued the whole day.

28th. The wind rather more favourable.

29th. A good wind. At three o'clock we were off Larnaca. We were just about to enter the road, when a sanitary boat came and brought us the melancholy intelligence that the cholera was making frightful havoc at Alexandria, and throughout all Egypt and Syria, and that all intercourse with those countries was broken off. We came from Venice ; but we could not obtain permission to land without proving that we had had no communication with any other vessel, while at sea.

This evening we came to an anchor ; we were regular, and were allowed to land. To make me forget his little whims, the captain hoisted, with the Austrian flag, that of Jerusalem, which he had on board by the greatest of accidents ; he proposed even to salute me with all his guns at the moment of going ashore. I had great difficulty to prevail upon him to abstain from so silly an act, which would have thrown ridicule both on himself and on me, a poor Trappist.

I wrote immediately to the Austrian consul, M. Antonio Caprara ; I sent him the letters of recommendation that I had for him ; I begged him to inform the Franciscan friars of the Holy Land of my arrival, and to say that I wished to lodge with them.

September 30th. I landed, and called upon the Austrian consul, who took me in his carriage to Larnaca, and introduced me to his wife, his children, his chancellor, and his drogmans. I then went to the convent of the Franciscan friars, who received me with religious humility and charity.

I cannot tell you, my dear friend, what a consolation I feel on finding myself again in a monastery. I cannot tire of sadly contemplating those long cloisters, half in ruins, those arms of Jerusalem on all the walls, those monks, far away from their native land, beneath a sultry sky, singing the praises of the Lord, among Turks, Greeks, and Arabs.

The Turks of this country respect the pilgrims, whom they call *hadji*. I wear my religious habit, an object of curiosity to the multitude, though they never think of annoying me or turning me into derision. These good

Turks are not yet sufficiently advanced in civilization, to know how offensive the dresses peculiar to the religious orders are to the enlightenment of the present day. I let my beard grow, according to the custom of the monks.

Though this is the 30th of September, the sun is scorching, the fields parched up, and quite white. The few shrubs that are to be seen are covered with dust, and the country, of a whitish hue, looks dull and monotonous. You perceive, at the first glance, that every thing here is Asiatic; every thing strikes the European who is here for the first time. You meet, every moment, long files of camels, driven by Arabs and Turks, on foot or on horseback, armed cap-a-pee, and veiled women, no part of whom is to be seen but their eyes.

La Marina and Larnaca are two towns, if towns they may be called, which, as it were, adjoin one another. Nothing can be meaner or duller; they begin to give you an idea of the towns of the Levant: paltry mud-built houses, with terraces — that is all. I found them almost deserted. A great number of inhabitants had fled to the mountains, since the appearance of the cholera morbus, which is believed to have been introduced into the island through the criminal conduct of the consul-general of Tuscany, at Alexandria. He fled, himself, from the scourge that was ravaging Egypt; and, that no obstacle might be opposed to his landing, he omitted to declare the death of his secretary and of several sailors, who had expired during the passage. When the trick was discovered, he was forced to embark again. But the panic was the greater, inasmuch as

several other clandestine landings had been effected at different points by crews coming from Syria, where the cholera was making rapid ravages. Damascus, Jaffa, St. Jean d'Acre, and Jerusalem, have lost, I am told, a prodigious number of their inhabitants.

You will assuredly, my dear friend, not expect me to repeat to you what the island of Cyprus was for pagan antiquity, or that I should tell you of the infamous goddess to whom it was consecrated, of the festivals held in honour of that goddess, and of the impure worship paid to her at Paphos and Amathonte, by a people addicted to voluptuousness and sunk in debauchery. A pilgrim, on his way to visit the tomb of the Messiah, turns his thoughts from such scenes, and leaves the delineation of them to that class of poets, whose wanton Muse blushes not to celebrate in her verses the most culpable excesses of the mind, the most disgraceful propensities of the heart. Instead of such details, I will tell you at least in a few words what may be more interesting to you, in regard to religion and history, since the commencement of the Christian era.

The island of Cyprus, situated between the coast of Syria and Cilicia, now Caramania, is the most considerable island in this part of the Mediterranean. In the year 44, of Christ, St. Paul and St. Barnabas went thither to promulgate the Gospel; they preached at first at Salamis, in the synagogues of the Jews, and then proceeded to the other towns. At Paphos, St. Paul converted the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, by striking blind the false prophet Bar Jesu, who opposed his preaching. Some years afterwards, St. Barnabas, who is believed to

be the first bishop of Cyprus, was stoned at Salamis by the Jews, and died a martyr. The body of the apostle was discovered in the sequel near that place. In the coffin was found a copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew, in Hebrew, written with the saint's own hand. It was sent, in 485, to the emperor Zeno.

After forming several kingdoms, tributary to Egypt and the Roman empire, Cyprus fell under the dominion of the emperors of the West and of Constantinople. It was long in the possession of Isaac I., of the family of the Comnenes. Richard I., of England, having conquered it, sold it to the Templars, who gave it up again to Richard, and by him it was at length ceded to Guy de Lusignan. Charlotte, the last heiress of that family, was driven from it by her natural brother James. She married Louis of Savoy; and hence it is that the kings of Sardinia still take the title of king of Cyprus. After the death of James, Cornara, his wife, having no male issue, disposed of the island in 1480 to the republic of Venice. In 1570, the Turks made themselves masters of it, and are still its possessors.

The island of Cyprus is two hundred and twenty miles in length, sixty-five in breadth, and about six hundred in circumference. It is crossed from west to east by a range of mountains, the loftiest of which are Olympus, and Santa Croce. Famagousta, Nicosia, and Larnaca, are the only important towns in the island, which is otherwise celebrated for its fertility. What a pity that it does not belong to a European sovereign! Under the dominion of the Porte, and under the blood-suckers, called governors of the island, it is falling

entirely to decay. "Every day," says a celebrated traveller, on this subject, "some new tax is devised ; and, after fattening on the substance of the people, after enriching the agents of his cruelties, this governor retires, laden with gold and curses, to make room for another, who surpasses his predecessor in rapine and oppression."

A few moments before my departure from Fribourg, the bishop of Lausanne committed to my charge a letter and a donation, which the Visitandine sisters of that city wished to transmit to a monastery of their order. "How happy our sisters would be," said the prelate, if you could yourself execute this commission !" "You shall be obeyed, monseigneur," I immediately replied. I supposed that this commission was for some town in Switzerland or Savoy. I looked at the address, and read : *To the Superior of the Visitandines, at Antoura, on Mount Lebanon, in Asia.* What was my surprise ! "Monseigneur," I exclaimed, "let Antoura be ever so far distant, with the blessing of God, your commission shall be fulfilled In fact, till my arrival in Cyprus, I hoped myself to be the bearer of the alms of the good sisters of Fribourg ; but here I am all at once stopped short. It has pleased God that the disease with which he is now visiting the world should, for the moment, render it impossible for me to approach that land in which I so ardently long to shed tears of love and gratitude : all the communications with those regions of death are now cut off. Alas ! when I think that he did not permit the pious leader of Israel to enter the land of promise, ought not I to tremble ! But, once more,

blessed be his will, ever just, ever adorable ! And if he decrees that the hand which is writing these lines should in a few hours be cold and stiff, still blessed be his name !

I experience here, my dear friend, what several Europeans have done on coming to this country, a general indisposition, an inconceivable debility ; on some days I can scarcely ascend the stairs that lead to my apartment ; and to all this is superadded a complaint, which in Egypt is called the *Nile Flower*—a sort of leprosy, which covers me from head to foot. On looking at myself, I fancy that I am like that man of immense sufferings, the pious Job : happy could I but share his patience as I share his afflictions !

I have this moment received the melancholy tidings that the viceroy of Egypt is marching against the Pacha of Acre, whose pachalik extends over all Palestine. Poor Palestine ! Jerusalem then will in a few weeks fall a prey to the Egyptian army, which will bring all the calamities of war in its train ! My situation is the more unpleasant, inasmuch as I am engrossed by but one thought, and that is continually directed towards that sacred land, the end and aim of my journey. However, my friend, in my dictionary the word *fear* is struck out of the number of those that I keep for my use ; besides, I have often found by experience that courage consists in attempting, and that danger flees from him who confronts it. I shall therefore endeavour, in spite of the advanced and perilous season, in spite of a thousand other obstacles, to get across, and, for want of a ship, in some Arab bark, that will land me on the coast of Palestine, fifty or sixty leagues from this place.

Here is a very long letter, my dear friend. You will easily perceive, from the nature of the details, and the reflections which accompany them, that it was not the work of a single day. While waiting for an opportunity to despatch it, I have taken up the pen again and again, whenever any thing likely to interest you occurred to my mind. Farewell. Pray for me. My next letter to you will come, unless God should order it otherwise, from the opposite coast.

LETTER XI.

PARALYSIS—DANGEROUS SYMPTOMS—ATTENTIONS OF THE CONSUL, THE
FATHERS OF THE HOLY LAND AND THE PHYSICIANS—CONVALESCENCE
— PICTURES PRESENTED BY THE EMPRESS MARIA THERESA — RENE-
GADOES—PLAGUE—DEPARTURE FOR JAFFA.

Larnaca, November 25th, 1831.

Man proposes, and God disposes, my dear friend. It has pleased him, in his infinite mercy, to strike me with paralysis. The right side and the head have been affected; the right eye, the cheek, and the mouth, have been wholly deprived of their natural motions. I could not speak, eat, or drink, without great difficulty. It was in the night that I perceived that my face had undergone a great change. I rose, and soon had the melancholy conviction that I was paralytic. What alarmed me most was that right eye, in spite of me constantly open, motionless, fixed stedfastly on me, and seeming to say: "No Palestine now, for thee: thou must die." However, another part had not suffered; the brain was untouched.

I must confess that at first I experienced a painful feeling, on seeing myself thus disfigured. However, God inspired me with the idea to go to the church, in order to offer to him this disease, in a spirit of penitence; and, if I recollect rightly, I recited the *Te Deum*. Greek physicians were sent for; they assured me that bleeding was urgently necessary. I refused to submit to it, having, I know not why, an invincible aversion to that operation, especially in a hot climate, and in a season when the heat was still oppressive. But the superior of the monastery, seeing that I was in the greatest danger, said to me, in a severe tone: "Father, I order you to suffer yourself to be bled." I then obeyed, without hesitation, and it is said that this saved me.

I shall never forget the evening of the following day. I was in great pain, and, to bodily sufferings were added those of the mind, because I dreaded the progress of the paralysis; and then, how could I help recollecting that I was six hundred leagues from my country, and from all that was dear to me! I was, nevertheless, not forsaken; for all the Fathers of the Holy Land surrounded my sick bed, and administered all sorts of consolations. But, O new affliction! a Portuguese monk caught my eye, and he seemed to announce, by repeated signs, that it was all over with me. However, in a faint voice, and scarcely capable of articulating a few broken words, I thanked the community for the interest that it had manifested for a poor pilgrim; I commended myself to its prayers, and I made some dispositions, in case of death. My thoughts were chiefly turned towards the manger, where Eternal Love submitted to be born,

towards Golgotha, towards the holy sepulchre, and, when I reflected that, in all probability, I should never behold those places so dear to my heart, my eyes filled with tears.

What a fine study would that spacious chamber, lighted by a single lamp, have offered to a painter ! that chamber, where, stretched on a divan, in my white habit of La Trappe, I was surrounded by those good monks, whose very dark dress strongly contrasted with mine. Their long beards, their hands folded over their bosoms, and that expression of countenance, in which charity was stamped in each of their features, presented an exact likeness of the ancient anchorets.

During my illness, all the consuls were assiduous in their attentions, and especially M. Caprara, the Austrian consul. The Greek physicians who attended me were indefatigable.

I cannot express what I felt the first time I was allowed to go down into the garden. I thank thee, O my guardian angel ! thou knowest if I was intoxicated with delight, on perceiving that I was able to continue my pilgrimage. Yes, to me that thought was full of rapture ; it poured into my soul torrents of ineffable joy.

In one of my rooms, where I generally sit, and which is called the room of the divans, because it is surrounded with them, I have two pictures of very large dimensions ; one of them representing St. Francis of Assisi, the other, St. Antony of Padua. Underneath these pictures are the arms of Austria, with the letters M. T. They were a present from Maria Theresa, from that princess, whose soul, greater than even her vast dominions, de-

lighted in dispensing benefits, even in the most distant countries; who astonished the world by her piety, as much as by her courage, and who, surrounded by grandeur and magnificence, took pleasure in humbling before the Eternal King her august head, on which so many crowns shed their radiance, never forgetting that, though an empress, she was but dust and ashes; of that sovereign, in short, whose heart was constantly open to the petitions of her subjects, and whose name was always a name of blessing and of love. A beautiful clock, which stands at the door of my chamber, was also a gift from the same empress.

I shall soon have been two months at Cyprus, my dear friend. Since my convalescence, I frequently ride out on horseback, to explore the environs, but my favourite resort is the sea-shore. Thither I never go without tarrying a long time, with my eyes turned towards the land, after which I sigh, and which is the object of all my wishes.

Here you unfortunately meet with several renegadoes, who became Turks at the time of the massacres; some, to save their lives; others, that they might be able to trade more freely. To forsake, to deny, one's God, from fear of death, is a horrible thing, no doubt; but to deny him, to abjure him, in cold blood, from no other motive than sordid interest, is the basest of infamy. If, at the corner of a narrow street, I chanced to meet a cart, laden with corpses of persons infected with the plague, and it was impossible for me to avoid the contact with it, I should feel less alarm, less horror, than at the sight of a renegado.

Our monastery has been kept shut for a fortnight, on account of a rumour of the plague, which was added to the terror caused by the cholera. I could not help smiling at the earnestness with which the good Fathers observed certain petty precautions, at the same time that they neglected others of far greater importance. On the one hand, nothing was admitted without a strict purification ; long pincers, vinegar, were always ready ; not a potato was taken in till it had been dipped twenty times in water ; on the other, ten cats, belonging to the house, went in and out at pleasure, and were liable every moment to introduce the distemper. One day, having myself cried out to the porter, who was opening the door for a dog : “ Father Genipert, what are you about ? beware of the plague ; ” he replied, with the utmost ingenuousness : “ But surely our poor Castor must not go without his dinner ! ” Castor was not turned out till yesterday. Such inconsistency on the part of these good Fathers enables one to account for the death of all the monks of the monastery of St. Jean d’Acre. These latter, however, if they showed equal imprudence in regard to the means of external communication, the sole preservative against the plague, displayed an heroic charity, by mutually nursing one another, in spite of the danger of death, which of course they could not thus escape. From the position of the corpses, it was to be inferred that the two Fathers, who were the last victims, had expired nearly at the same moment : one was stretched beside the bed of the other, holding in his hand a cup, which indicated that he was handing something to his dying brother. Probably their spirits appeared to-

gether before God, to receive the recompence of their charity.

P. S. Blessed be the God of mercy! I am this moment informed that a Turkish schooner is to sail the day after to-morrow for Jaffa; I shall endeavour to secure a passage in her, cost what it may.

LETTER XII.

TURKISH SCHOONER, THE ELPIS (HOPE)—THE CAPTAIN; THE CREW—MOUSTAPHA, THE CAPTAIN'S SON—IMPATIENCE TO DESCRIBE THE HOLY LAND—PILGRIMS ON BOARD—YOUNG GREEK WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN—VIEW OF THE COAST OF PALESTINE—JAPPA; ITS DANGEROUS ROAD; LANDING—MONASTERY OF THE FATHERS OF THE HOLY LAND—WRECK OF THE TURKISH SCHOONER—JAPPA TAKEN BY ISRAHIM PACHA—M. MOSTRAS, RUSSIAN CONSUL—VEILED WOMEN—FRANCISCAN FATHERS AND THEIR CONVENTS IN ASIA AND AFRICA.

Jaffa, December 3d, 1831.

I have just arrived at this town, my dear friend, on board the Turkish schooner, Elpis (Hope), commanded by Captain Hussein. We had a most agreeable passage; not that the wind was always the most favourable, but we had most splendid weather, very seasonably for me; for the cabin is a sort of kennel where you can scarcely stand upright, and where the stench is insupportable. I never lay down to rest but upon deck, without any other bed than a carpet and a blanket. Had I not taken the precaution to buy these indispensable articles for my voyage in Cyprus, I should frequently have found myself obliged to lie on the bare boards.

Whoever has not been the inmate of a Turkish vessel

cannot form any correct idea of one: nay, the most accurate description would fall short of the reality. Our captain, squatted on cushions, slept or smoked. The Greek sailors, to the number of five or six, gamed, amused themselves, or played tricks with one another. The most intelligent of the whole crew was Moustapha, the captain's son, a fine boy, seven or eight years old, with a prepossessing face, having an expression of extraordinary candour and honesty. He was the little steward: it was he who had charge of the provisions, and he performed that duty with peculiar grace and cleverness. The very day that I went on board, this boy interested me by an action worthy of remark. He was eating, and, having dropped a morsel of bread, he picked it up with respect, raised it thrice to his forehead, then to his mouth, at the same time lifting his eyes to heaven, as much as to say that he knew the value of the food which God in his bounty was pleased to bestow on him. Poor boy! said I frequently to myself, as I looked at him, what a pity that thou art not a Christian!

Moustapha was cabin-boy also. Nothing was more curious than to see him climb to the mast-head with the lightness and agility of a squirrel: to descend, he glided down by a rope with frightful rapidity.

It was a curious sight, too, to see him at the helm: he then assumed a look of gravity, which formed a singular contrast with his age. The whole crew admired him. For my part, I did not like to see him at that post, which the seamen occasionally relinquished to him, either from indolence, or in compliance with his request, and with a view to obtain from him, as steward, a larger

portion of beans or biscuit. But if Moustapha was a most amiable boy, he was also a most artful one. Perceiving my impatience to get sight of the Holy Land, he took it into his head one day to ascend the mast and to shout "Land! land!" At that word every one rose, for there were other pilgrims on board; they looked, they rubbed their eyes, they looked again, but not a creature could descry any thing, except Moustapha, who, with his little turban in his hand, went round from pilgrim to pilgrim to beg a *bakshisch*, that is, a gratuity, for his good news, which every one cheerfully gave him with a smile, convinced that it was one of his tricks.

During the first days, we steered without compass. On my most peremptory demand, one was brought and soon furnished subject for dispute. The fact was that we were out of our track. It was mortifying. Luckily, we had, as I have told you, magnificent weather, though a contrary wind. To give you some idea of the confusion that prevailed on board, I must tell you, my dear friend, that, on the second day, having desired to have some eggs boiled for my dinner, I was told that there was no wood, because the clerk had forgot to procure some in Cyprus These people, no doubt, imagined that, as a Trappist pilgrim, the hope of soon descrying the country towards which all my thoughts were bent, to which all my affections were directed, would not only nourish my soul, but support my body. I bore it patiently.

The night of the 1st of December was one of ravishing beauty. A gentle calm pervaded the air; the sky presented a veil sprinkled with diamonds. The waves sported about our schooner. The wife who is expecting

a beloved husband, whom she has not seen for a long time; the mother, who every moment fancies that she hears the step of a son whom she longs to see again after murderous wars; the young damsel who is going to be married, and is waiting the arrival of him who is to conduct her to the altar, and to vow to her everlasting love — feel not more eager impatience than I did to see the Holy Land. The pilgrims on board shared that impatience. A young Greek woman, from the environs of Constantinople, who was going to Jerusalem with her husband and three little children, kept continually upon deck. One of these children was still at the breast. The two others were incessantly asking her questions, and she pointed to the distance, beyond the sea . . . and, standing on tiptoe with their little feet, they looked with all their eyes, without ceasing to chat and to question their mother, who seemed to me to be always talking to them about God. At length, at daybreak we perceived Palestine! We sunk upon our knees, with our eyes fixed on that land, which the Saviour of the world has filled with his mysteries and covered with his prodigies! At seven in the morning, we were off Cæsarea; on the left, in the distance, rose Mount Carmel. I had before me the coast of Palestine; it looks miserably dull.

In the evening, we came to an anchor off Jaffa. It is a town built amphitheatrically, of very sombre aspect. Its first name was Joppa, and so it is called in Scripture, in which it is frequently mentioned. Some profane authors have asserted that it was thus named from Joep, daughter of Eolus and wife of Cepheus. It is commonly believed to be one of the most ancient towns in the

world, and to owe its foundation to Japhet, the second son of Noah. It was there that Jonah embarked to go to Tarsus. Hiram, king of Tyre, sent thither ships laden with timber and marble, to be forwarded to Solomon for the construction of the Temple. St. Peter dwelt there when he had a vision relative to Cornelius, and when he revived Tabitha. Josephus relates that the Romans utterly demolished this town during the siege of Jerusalem.

The road of Jaffa is very dangerous, and much dreaded by navigators, who must always be upon their guard.

Yesterday morning, at daybreak, boats put off and surrounded the vessel, to take us to the town, the access to which is difficult on account of the numerous rocks that present to view their bare flanks. The walls were covered with spectators, attracted by curiosity. The boats being much lower than the bridge upon which one is obliged to climb, and having no ladder, the landing is not effected without danger. More than once it has happened that passengers, in springing out, have broken their limbs, and we might have met with the like accident, if several persons had not hastened to our assistance. The apathetic indolence of the Turkish administration witnesses all this without applying a remedy.

No sooner had I landed than, notwithstanding the crowd drawn together around me by the strangeness of my costume, I knelt down to kiss that sacred soil to which God, in his mercy, had brought me in so miraculous a manner. The Turks and the soldiers of the vice-

roy of Egypt, great numbers of whom were there, much as they might be astonished at my conduct, showed not the least sign of disapprobation ; nay, several of them, apparently comprehending its motive, gave me tokens of respect : the word *hadji*, pilgrim, was heard on all sides. Meanwhile, as the crowd kept increasing, the dragomans of the Fathers of the Holy Land of Jaffa, who had been sent to meet me, cleared the way, and, walking before me, conducted me to the monastery. I begged, before I did any thing else, to be taken to the church. I then carried my letters of recommendation to the superior, and visited the other Fathers, who received me kindly and politely. The nephew of cardinal Don Emmanuel Cantillo Jovellanos, archbishop of Toledo, a young priest of the Holy Land, gave up his chamber to me. The monastery had just been rebuilt with materials brought from Cæsarea. O, Providence of my God ! those stones which had been used by Herod to found a town in honour of Augustus now served to build a temple to the child whose birth had filled him with such alarm, and whom he purposed to destroy. Though entirely new-built, the monastery of Jaffa, which has cost a great deal of money, is like all the monasteries of the Holy Land : it exhibits the appearance of a fortress, of a castle of the tenth century ; a heap of stones piled one upon another, and that is all.

The cell which I occupy looks out upon the sea. Long did I linger at my window, contemplating that superb but treacherous element, the bond of the two worlds, which its roaring billows would engulf, if the mighty hand of God had not placed a barrier to it in the grain of sand,

which he has commanded to stop it. I looked with a feeling of pleasure, and a sort of gratitude, at the frail vessel which had conveyed me to Palestine. Such is the way with man ; a passenger in this great vale of tears, he suffers his soul and his immortal affections to cling to every thing that surrounds and is close to him . . . Alas ! never was I to behold that vessel again : a few hours afterwards she struck upon the rocks, which render the road of Jaffa so dangerous. She was completely wrecked ; the crew were saved, after having undergone all the horrors of death. Had I continued on board a few moments longer, I too might perhaps have by this time been no more. At the moment that I am writing these lines, the Fathers of the Holy Land would probably have been employed in removing my body, extended on the beach ; and after a few hours passed in the church, amidst funeral chants, they would have carried it to its last home. The Arab, on seeing the procession, would have inquired whom they were interring. “ We know not,” would have been the reply of one of the Fathers ; “ it is a pilgrim from the vessel that has just been wrecked ; from his dress he appears to be a monk.” And the cold earth would have covered me, the while not one friend would have stood beside my grave, not one tear would have dropped upon my coffin ; and, upon the little mound of dust, formed by my mortal remains, never would there have been seen the print of the knee of a creature that had loved me !

At the time of our arrival, Jaffa, as you may have inferred from what I have previously said, was in the power of the viceroy of Egypt. Ibrahim Pacha, the son of that

prince, had taken it some days before by a stratagem, the idea of which had been suggested to him by an unexpected circumstance, and which he had carried into execution with equal skill and promptitude. He was going with some ships to attack St. Jean d'Acre; as he was passing Jaffa, a number of persons belonging to that town took it into their heads to put off and visit him. But no sooner were they on board than, profiting by the occasion, he ordered the pilots who had brought them to be seized, and forced them to steer some of the ships of war, and to effect during the night the landing of fifteen hundred men, who immediately made themselves masters of the place. Taken unawares, the soldiers of the Pacha of St. Jean d'Acre fled without fighting.

There is at Jaffa a Russian consul, M. Mostras, a very amiable man, who is kept there by his sovereign solely to afford assistance to the pilgrims of his nation.

Nothing can be more beautiful or more fertile than the gardens around the town. The lemon and orange trees, the fruit of which is in high repute, are in such profusion that the leaves scarcely allow you to discern the stems and the branches which support them.

Here it is that the traveller begins to meet with women completely veiled. When I say veiled, I mean not that kind of veil which descends from the head to the waist, but a sort of black or yellowish green covering, drawn so close over the face as to suffer nothing but the marks of the nose, chin, and cheeks to be perceived: of the mouth and eyes you see no traces. It is frightful, it is horrible, to a European not accustomed to this sight. I met in a street a party of these phantom women, whose notice

was attracted by my Trappist habit. I shuddered on finding myself surrounded by such figures; I could not help thinking of the witches in Macbeth They are all thickly clothed; they throw over them, when they go abroad, a large piece of white cotton, which covers them from head to foot, and with which they form a graceful drapery. With this they wear boots, generally yellow; which, by their capaciousness, perfectly correspond with all the rest. I know not to what to compare a Turkish woman, accoutred in this fashion: by her head she is like a spectre, and by the rest of her body she resembles a walking barrel, set up on two thick pieces of timber. The women of the lowest class fasten a dirty rag over the nose and mouth, leaving only the eyes, which are very often sore, uncovered . . . But what am I about, my friend? Am I not going out of my way to notice things so foreign to the object of my travels? The disagreeable impression which they have made upon me has caused me to forget that I am in the Holy Land, and has, I may say, in spite of myself, diverted my thoughts for a moment from the happiness that awaits me.

I set out to-morrow for Rama, and shall thence proceed to Jerusalem.

A few words more. The monastery which I am about to leave is inhabited by Spanish Franciscan Fathers only, who, with the Italians, are charged with the service of the monasteries of Palestine in general. The Father warden of the tomb of our Saviour, who is highest in dignity, must always be an Italian; the vicar, who is next to him, was always a Frenchman; but, since the suppression of the monastic orders in France, that office

is given alternately to Spaniards and Italians. The third high office, and perhaps the most important, is that of procurator: it embraces the temporal concerns of the monasteries of the Holy Land, and can be conferred only on a Spaniard. The convents occupied by the Franciscan Fathers, in Asia and Africa, are those of Jerusalem, Rama, St. Jean d'Acre, Jaffa, Larnaca, Nicosia, Bethlehem, St. John of the Desert, Nazareth, Sidon, Tripoli in Syria, Alexandria, Cairo, Mount Lebanon, Damascus, and Aleppo.

At Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth, the Fathers are of the two nations; at Jaffa, Rama, St. John of the Desert, and Damascus, the Fathers are exclusively Spaniards. The other places are served by the Italians.

Adieu, my dear Charles, adieu.

LETTER XIII.

DEPARTURE FROM JAFFA — UNPLEASANT RIDING — ADVENTURE IN THE MARKET-PLACE — SPLENDID WEATHER — CATTLE — RAMA — MONASTERY — CISTERN OF ST. HELENA — TOWER OF THE FORTY MARTYRS.

Rama, December 5th, 1831.

I set out yesterday afternoon from Jaffa, with a guide, a mule for myself, and two asses for my baggage: I brought away, among other things, a sack of potatoes. This may appear strange to you; but as I never eat meat, as there are few culinary vegetables in Palestine, and as the fruit season is over, I must make some provision for my numerous excursions.

I cannot tell you how much I was alarmed on seeing that the mule on which I was to perform the journey

from Jaffa hither had, instead of saddle, a prodigious bag full of I know not what, spliced cords for stirrups, and a chain fastened round his neck for a bridle. I scolded, I intreated, I promised money, but to no purpose; I was obliged to clamber up to my wretched seat, and to keep my legs so wide apart, that I arrived with my back almost broken. How shall I get from this place to Jerusalem! Twelve or fourteen hours more on such a steed, and upon dreadful roads—what will become of me! But I am forgetting myself . . . I am complaining! . . . And is it on the way to Jerusalem that a Christian, a monk, a Trappist, should complain at the idea of a hardship!

In leaving Jaffa, I lost my guide, and strayed into a square where a market was held, and where the numerous dealers had spread oranges, glasses, pots, and various other wares upon the ground. About the eatables in particular I observed a great number of Turks, Arabs, and Egyptian soldiers, who were easily known by their red dress, and many women and children; all these groupes were intermixed with asses and camels, in such a manner as not to leave a passage; and I, on my sorry mule without bridle, hemmed in among the populace, inquired, in Italian, if any one had seen my guide, and which was the way to Rama: but they laughed at me. The sellers, too near whom I was coming, and who already saw my mule's hoofs among their commodities, set up loud cries; every body shoved me; the little Arabs pelted me: in short, I was in a situation the more unpleasant, inasmuch as the least impatience, the least violence, on my part, might have led to disastrous consequences.

However, I soon perceived a Turk, in whom I had probably excited some pity, coming towards me: without saying a word to me, he seized my mule by the chain, and clearing a way, at the same time showing little mercy to the young Bedouins, he led me to the gate through which I had to pass in order to reach the Rama road. There I found my guide and my baggage I must do justice to the Egyptian soldiers: they behaved very well, and did not even indulge in a smile. In general, soldiers, even though ill-trained and ill-clothed, have a sort of discipline that is easily perceived.

The weather was brilliant, and reminded me of the beautiful spring days of Italy. The plain of Sharon, which I traversed, so extolled in Scripture, was enamelled with flowers. In this beautiful plain you perceive, from time to time, some mean hamlets. I passed near one of them; it was surrounded by innumerable herds of cows, flocks of sheep, and, above all, of black goats of extraordinary beauty. Their long pendent ears are particularly remarkable. I do not recollect to have seen so great a quantity of cattle near any village in Europe: they reminded me of the flocks of Abraham, of Lot, and of Jacob. It was in this plain that Sampson burned the corn of the Philistines: foxes are very common there.

The nearer I approached to Jerusalem, the more my heart throbbed. I was glad to arrive on Saturday evening at Rama, that I might pass the Sunday there, and prepare myself for the memorable day of my entry into the holy city—the fairest, the happiest day of my life!

Rama, nearly on the borders of the plain of Sharon, is in a delightful situation. The town is very ill built.

The houses, of gray stone, look like large sheds ; the streets are horrible : in rainy weather, you cannot take four steps without getting up to your knees in mud. To reach the place, I passed through a forest of nopals, of immense extent. I alighted at the house of the Fathers of the Holy Land, where I was very kindly received, though it was late.

The monastery is built on the site of the house of Nicodemus, to whom the church is dedicated. Its only inmates are two Spanish Fathers and a lay-brother.

This morning, after service, I went to see the cistern constructed by direction of St. Helena, mother of Constantine. You descend into it by about thirty steps : the interior is very spacious ; it contains twenty-four arcades, formerly adorned with fine paintings, which time has almost effaced. Palestine is full of monuments, which attest the piety and charity of that illustrious princess.

At the distance of a short quarter of a league is the Tower of the Forty Martyrs, from the top of which you have a magnificent view. This tower, which produces a very good effect, is falling to ruin. It is surrounded with cloisters of handsome architecture belonging to a monastery, the name of which has slipped my memory.

I reckoned upon leaving to-day ; but the weather, hitherto so fine, has suddenly changed : it has been raining all night. My guide, like all the Turks, is not fond of getting wet : he has not come for me, though I expected him with the beasts. Of course I cannot start till to-morrow. The most contradictory reports are circulated respecting the greater or less degree of safety

upon the roads between this place and Jerusalem. Some assert that there is no danger whatever ; others say that Arabs, taking advantage of the anarchy prevailing in Palestine, now in a manner without master, are infesting the roads, and adding murder and massacre to robbery and plunder. I shall know more about it to-morrow.

LETTER XIV.

DEPARTURE FROM RAMA — MOUNTAINS OF JUDEA — VILLAGE OF JEREMIAH — ABOU GOSH — BEDOUINS — MOUNT OF OLIVES — JERUSALEM — ENTRY INTO THE HOLY CITY — CHURCH OF ST. SAVIOUR — FRANCISCAN FATHERS — FOOT-WASHING — CELL — FIRST NIGHT IN JERUSALEM — TERRACE OF THE MONASTERY — VIEW FROM IT — VIA DOLOROSA — PILATE'S PRÆTORIUM — THE GATE BAB-EL-SIDI-MARIAM — SPOT WHERE STEPHEN WAS STONED — GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE — THE BROOK CEDRON — OLIVE TREES — GROTTA OF THE AGONY — PLACE WHERE JUDAS BETRAYED HIS MASTER — FESTIVAL OF THE CONCEPTION — MAGNIFICENCE OF THE CHURCH — VISITS TO THE PRINCIPAL FATHERS.

Jerusalem, December 8th, 1831.

The day before yesterday, at five in the morning, redoubled knocks at the gate of the monastery intimated to me the arrival of my guide. Day was beginning to dawn, when I mounted a horse. The guide rode upon an ass, and my baggage was carried by a mule. I was dressed in my Trappist habit ; for, as I have already had occasion to tell you, in this land of infidels, a monk may do what he would not dare to do in countries calling themselves Christian. A wooden cross and a chaplet hung at my side. To my shame be it said, I should not have been sorry to add to them the sword that I formerly wore. The sky was cloudy. The thoughts of that city, where every thing reminds you of the Saviour of the

world, filled my soul more than ever, and wholly engrossed me. I had before me the hills of Judea, which I was two hours and a half in reaching, after having crossed an unequal and uncultivated plain. These hills, at first very low, gradually increase in height, and present but a stern and gloomy aspect. They are rocks piled amphitheatrically one upon another, on the flanks of which you perceive nought save a few olive-trees and some oaks, that look as though scathed by lightning.

As for roads, there is not a trace of any—nothing but stones that roll under your feet. Fortunately, the horses and mules of the country are so accustomed to them that they seldom trip, even in the most difficult places. When arrived at a certain height, I turned about towards the south, to look at that beautiful plain of Sharon and the sea which bounds it; my eye, saddened by the sterility of the soil, needed that relief.

Between Rama and Jerusalem you pass through a village called Jeremiah. There you have to pay a duty, or rather a forced contribution, to the chief of an Arab tribe, who might, without any violation of charity, be termed a chief of banditti. His name is Ibrahim Abou Gosh. He has succeeded his brother, Ibals el Rouman, who was the terror of the country, and died a few months since, while returning from Mecca. As some travellers had recently been plundered and their guide murdered, it was not without some alarm that I approached this place, especially when I found that I was obliged to pass through about thirty Arabs lying on the ground, whose turbans I had not perceived till within pistol-shot of them.

As we advanced, the more arid became the mountains

and the more difficult the roads. We proceeded **between** whitish rocks, perceiving here and there only a little **pale** grass, for which some goats were fighting, and **leafless** bushes, whose roots were exposed to view. **Hideous-**looking Bedouins, scantily covered with rags, passed us from time to time, some on foot, others on horseback **and** armed. My dress seemed to surprise them much : **they** stopped and looked stedfastly at me. In some narrow passes, I was so close to them that we almost touched one another. My guide had some moments of uneasiness.

We had ceased to ascend, we were traversing a **stony** plain ; it began to rain very fast, and we had before us one of the finest rainbows that I have ever seen. Its brightness served only to render the objects on which it was reflected still more dull and dreary.

It was four o'clock—the holy city could not be far distant. My heart throbbed ; I breathed with difficulty : I fancied that, in every eminence which met my view, I beheld the walls of the holy city. Perceiving a tower and a few houses, I exclaimed, “ There it is ! ” but my guide informed me that it was the Mount of Olives. At that word, which calls forth in the pious spirit such touching recollections, I took off my hat in deep emotion ; my eyes filled with tears. I advanced bareheaded a quarter of an hour elapsed. Oh ! how long it was ! . . . All at once, in extacy, voiceless and palpitating with felicity, I flung myself from my horse, and, my brow bowed in the dust, I adored Jesus Christ, the son of the living God, the Saviour of the world—I had seen Jerusalem !

It wanted five minutes of five o'clock when I entered

the holy city, barefoot, by the gate of the Well-Beloved (Bab el Kzazil); at a quarter after five I was in the church of the Saviour, paying my adorations to him. The Franciscan Fathers received me with a charity worthy of him of whose tomb they are the keepers.

I delivered my letters of recommendation to the reverend Father Francis of the Grotto, warden of the holy sepulchre, to whom I was particularly recommended, agreeably to an order from his holiness, by the Propaganda at Rome. After my feet had been washed and I had taken some refreshment, I was conducted to my cell, opposite to that of the reverend Father. I needed rest; I was harassed; my body had suffered, and my soul had received impressions which no language can describe. Still I could not sleep; if at times I did doze off, I soon waked up again. Thou art at Jerusalem! said I to myself; thou art at Jerusalem, three hundred paces from Calvary, the tomb of Jesus Christ thy Saviour! and this idea roused all my faculties. Sometimes I was ready to ask myself if this were not a dream; but immediately the sweet conviction of the reality, removing this sort of doubt, left in my soul nought but a delicious feeling of happiness and joy.

My intention had been to go, as soon as I was up, to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and shut myself in with eight or nine monks of the Holy Land who are always there, as I shall explain to you by and by; but, as the festival of the immaculate conception was on the morrow, and the community might perhaps have thought it singular if I had not celebrated it with them, I deferred my visit to the Holy Sepulchre till the following day.

At dawn I was already on the terrace of the monastery, which commands a view of the whole city and its environs. The sun rose magnificently behind the Mount of Olives. I had in front the church of the Holy Sepulchre and its lofty cupolas ; farther off, the precincts and the site on which stood of old the temple of Solomon, bounded by the valley of Jehosaphat ; on the right, the ancient palace of David. On my knees, bending over the parapet, I could not tire of gazing at these places and these monuments. I scarcely listened to the good friar who pointed them out to me, for my heart had already guessed them before his lips had uttered their names ; I contemplated more especially that church of the Holy Sepulchre, to which are attached recollections so painful and so affecting. I should be obliged to wait twenty-four hours longer before I could go thither ; every moment seemed to me an age. I had fully made up my mind, however, to pay my first visit to Golgotha and the sacred tomb alone and in the silence of night. I knew how difficult this would be, on account of the great number of Greek and Armenian pilgrims who had come this year to Jerusalem ; I hoped, nevertheless, to find soon some favourable hour for the execution of my design. Meanwhile, eager to see the Via dolorosa, and unable thoroughly to satisfy my impatience, I resolved to inspect at least some of the places along which the divine victim had passed on his way to consummate the grand expiation.

At two in the afternoon I left the monastery of the Franciscan Fathers, accompanied by Father Perpetuus de Solera, secretary of the Holy Land, and a dragoman.

Deep sadness had taken possession of my soul; it increased as I advanced towards that theatre of so much anguish.

The street leading to the Via dolorosa is rather less irregular than that road itself, and there is an almost continual descent to the spot where Simon the Cyrenean assisted our Lord to carry his cross.

The first station that presents itself on quitting the monastery is that where Jesus, followed by an immense crowd, turned towards the women of Israel who were bewailing and weeping over his fate: it is marked by a walled-up doorway. I was impelled at this spot to pay some token of respect. The dragoman observed that I should be insulted by the Turks if they were to see me. I was not of his opinion: I fell upon my knees, and, on seeing the most remarkable places passed by the Son of God, laden with the cross on which he was to atone for the sins of men, I repeated the same homage of adoration and sorrow, and not a creature said a word to me.

We advanced along the Via dolorosa, when the Father who accompanied me stood still. "Here it was," said he, "that Jesus met his blessed mother!" These words produced a deep sensation; they will long reverberate in my soul. What person in the world would not feel moved when thinking of that fond mother, meeting her son who had already once fallen beneath his burden! . . . He was surrounded by executioners, covered with spittle, dust, and blood!

It was Jesus! it was her son! he whom she had suckled at her breast! whom she had warmed in her bosom! he, with whom she had fled into Egypt! whom

she had nursed in childhood ! with whom she had shared the bread of poverty ! whose absence for a few days only had caused her such painful alarm ! It was Jesus ! it was her son ! whom she saw going to die ! to die the most ignominious, the most painful of deaths ! it was her son whom she accompanied, and whose blood-stained footsteps she watered with her tears !

We arrived at the Prætorium of Pilate, where Christ was condemned to death. Opposite to the relics of that palace, and on the spot where the Man of Sorrows received with such entire resignation his sentence of death, methought I still heard the homicidal cries with which it had rung eighteen centuries ago ; and I could distinguish, amidst the clamours of death, these frightful words : “ His blood be upon us and upon our children ! ” Methought I could see them written in letters of blood on each of the stones by which I was surrounded !

It was not very late, and I longed to see the garden of Gethsemane, whither Jesus frequently retired with his disciples, and where, the evening before his death, he was betrayed by a kiss. I requested the Father secretary and the dragoman to take me to it. We passed through the gate Bab-el-Sidi-Mariam, which faces the Mount of Olives ; it is called indiscriminately St. Stephen's or Mary's gate, because through this gate the saint was taken to be stoned, and because it leads also to the tomb of the blessed Virgin.

We descended almost immediately by an extremely rapid declivity of the valley of Jehosaphat to the spot where St. Stephen was martyred : “ and they cast him out of the city, and stoned Stephen, calling upon God,

and saying : Lord Jesus, receive my spirit !" (Acts vii. 58, 59.) I was also shown the place where Saul, who was consenting to his death, is said to have taken care of the clothes of those who stoned him.

You are obliged to cross the brook Cedron in the way to the garden of Gethsemane. This garden belongs to the Fathers of the Holy Land ; it is enclosed only by a wretched wall, a yard high, built of uncemented stones. Its extent is upwards of one hundred paces square. It contains eight olive-trees of remarkable dimensions and of such visible antiquity, that one may well believe with the tradition that they existed at the time of Christ. I am aware that during the siege of the holy city, Titus ordered *all* the trees round about to be cut down. But even supposing the order to have been strictly executed, it appears to me allowable, and, indeed, perfectly reasonable, to think that some must have escaped ; as, in a town taken by assault, notwithstanding the formal orders of the general to put all to the sword, it is rarely, very rarely, that eight, ten persons, or more, do not escape the slaughter. Besides, it is ascertained that olive-trees live thousands of years ; and if those in question have no other advantage over trees of their kind than that of having drawn their sap from a soil moistened with the sweat and the blood of the Son of God suffering for guilty man, that ought, methinks, to be sufficient to fix the attention of the Christian, and to obtain for them a sort of homage. Accordingly, not a creature approaches them but with respect : the Greek, the Armenian, the very Arab, venerate them like ourselves.

The convent of Jerusalem keeps a Turkish guard to

prevent any one from meddling with these olive-trees, which, notwithstanding their decrepitude, yield a few olives, with which chaplets are made : their rarity seems to enhance still more the high value that is attached to them. I picked up a number of them. It was too late when I was told that it was forbidden upon pain of excommunication to touch the leaves and the branches. I had already taken the liberty to cut off some of them — a sin of ignorance which, I hope, you will deem very excusable. I will show them to you some day, if God brings me back to you.

Near the extremity of the garden is the spot where the apostles fell asleep when our Lord left them to pray. I was assured that their bodies had left an impression upon the stone on which they slept, and that some traces of it were still visible ; but I discovered nothing that could authorise me to believe such an assertion.

A little farther is the grotto in which Jesus prayed : it is called the Grotto of the Agony. It is in absolutely the same state as in the time of our Lord. The sort of vault which it forms is supported by three pilasters of the same rock. The light enters by an aperture made in the top, over which is placed a large grating to keep back the stones that the Turks might throw at it. Formerly the floor was on a level with the ground outside : now you descend into it by eight or ten steps. It is closed by a door, the key of which is kept by the Franciscan Fathers.

It was in this place, one of the most venerable in the world, that the Saviour underwent the pangs of death, that he felt agony inexpressible, that he lifted his droop-

ing hands towards the Creator, and that burning tears, trickling from his eyes and mingling with bloody sweat, bedewed his whole body ; it was here, in short, that the innocent Jesus endured for the sake of mankind all the rigours of inexorable justice On the very spot of the agony is an altar, and above it a picture representing our Lord supported by the angel who came to strengthen him. Here we find also the following inscription :—

HIC FACTUS EST SUDOR EJUS SICUT GUTTÆ
SANGUINIS DECURRENTIS IN TERRAM.

A spot which one cannot behold without feeling an inward shudder, is that where Judas delivered up his master. It is a space, fifteen or twenty paces in length, and two wide, between two low walls. It is called *Osculo*, from the kiss, in Latin *osculum*, with which the Son of Man was betrayed (Luke, xxii. 48). The pilgrim, after adoring Jesus betrayed and bound, immediately retires filled with horror.

If the wretched apostle, after the sacrilegious bargain, by which he had engaged to deliver up his master to the Jews, had said to them : He whom I shall strike is the man ; if he had then, at the head of a gang of homicides, and sword in hand, rushed upon Jesus, there would have been, after all, in this conduct, atrocious enough, it is true, but exempt from hypocrisy, something less hideous. This horrible idea would have been less revolting to the soul. But where do the annals of crimes present a more frightful signal of treachery than that of a kiss ?
“ Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he ; hold him

fast." What language ! The fondest token of love for selling a friend, a benefactor, a father, and for delivering him up to his bitterest enemies !

I returned to the monastery in religious silence.

To-day, the festival of the Conception, there has been a solemn service : the reverend Father warden of the Holy Sepulchre performed it with great pomp. He is mitred, crosiered, and bestows confirmation. His functions last for three years, at the expiration of which, if he be not re-elected, he returns to the shade of his cloister. The church was hung with rich draperies ; the vestments of the officiating clergy were white, and adorned with gold embroidery of great beauty : these were a present from Portugal. The throne of the Father warden, above which I remarked with pleasure the arms of Austria, is of cloth of silver. All that met my view was magnificent, but the objects that most struck me

- were two candelabra of silver, eight feet high, with basso-relievos of exquisite workmanship. They were made out of the remains of a lamp of extraordinary richness and beauty, presented by the imperial family of Austria, which so nobly unites piety and generosity with glory. This lamp contained three hundred smaller ones. Unfortunately so admirable a masterpiece excited the jealousy of the Greeks, who cut the chain by which it was suspended before the Holy Sepulchre, and thus caused its destruction.

The front of the altar is of massive silver. It represents the descent of the Holy Ghost ; it is a gift of the kings of Naples, as well as the canopy for the host, which is of gold, and enriched with precious stones.

Charles III. took from his finger a ring of great value to adorn this canopy. The Holy Land, in general, abounds in monuments of the piety of the catholic sovereigns of Europe, who, formerly, at least, took delight in decorating the sacred places with sumptuous ornaments. In no church have I seen any of such beauty as in that of Jerusalem. But what appeared to me, for my part, still more admirable, was the manner in which the service is performed; the majesty, the precision, the unity of the ceremonies, the harmony of the organ and of some fine voices—all this ravishes, enchants, and elevates the soul.

On coming out of church, I paid a visit to the principal members of the establishment. I was accompanied by Father Perpetuus, secretary of the Holy Land. Upon entering their cells, I was moved at the sight of the extreme poverty which I remarked in them: in each I found but a single wretched chair; so that, if courtesy offered it to me, the secretary was forced to sit on the bed, and the person whom I was visiting to stand or to seat himself on a little box, if he had one. "All for God, nothing for ourselves," is the noble motto of a monk of the Holy Land. The Father warden of the holy sepulchre has only two small ill-furnished rooms for his lodging Such, nevertheless, is the man, whom people have dared to represent as a sovereign surrounded with Asiatic splendour. And yet, in reality, he is but a poor Franciscan monk, who, excepting when he officiates, has no outward sign of his dignity, unless it be a silver-headed cane, which he uses when he goes abroad, barefooted like his brethren, dressed like his brethren, without crosier, without ring, and humble as

the lowest of the children of St. Francis. The table of the Fathers is extremely frugal ; but for that frugality, combined with the strictest economy, they could not afford relief to so many unfortunate persons as are fed and supported in the Holy Land ; they could not satisfy Turkish rapacity, or escape the vexations, the injustice, and the extortions of all kinds, with which they are continually threatened.

To-morrow, my dear friend, is the great day for me ; to-morrow I shall shut myself up in the church of the Holy Sepulchre ; to-morrow, if the crowd does not prevent me, upon Calvary, and beside the tomb of the Saviour of the world, with hands uplifted to heaven, I will perform the task which I imposed upon myself in coming to Jerusalem.



LETTER XV.

VISIT TO THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE—FRANCISCAN FATHERS
CLEANING THE SIDES OF THE SEPULCHRE—CELL—GALLERY ADJOIN-
ING TO IT—ENTRY INTO THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

Jerusalem, Church of the Holy Sepulchre,
December 16th, 1831.

Early in the morning of the 9th, I set out for the church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the dragoman and the Turks who had the key. No sooner had I entered than the latter locked the door. Nine or ten Franciscan friars dwell in this church, where they are shut up for three months. At the end of that time they are relieved, unless they choose to pass six months or a year there, out of devotion. My cell was ready for me.

It was that of the Father warden of the Holy Land. These good Fathers received me with the kindness which characterises them.

Before I touch upon other matters, my friend, it is right that I should give you some idea of this church. It is an extensive edifice, with two domes, very irregularly built, because it was requisite that regard should be paid to the inequalities of the ground that was to be encompassed by it. It contains not only the sepulchre, after which it is named, but also Calvary and some other sanctuaries.

The Catholics, the Greeks, the Armenians, are each in possession of a particular church. The Copts have but a chapel backed against the Holy Sepulchre ; and the Nestorians or Jacobites of Chaldea and Syria, as well as the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, merely an altar.

Divine service is performed there according to the ritual of different Christian nations. The first three only have a right to say mass in the Sepulchre. Close to their church is the convent in which the monks who shut themselves up here reside.

The pilgrims can have the privilege of being shut up for one night, and, in this case, they sleep in the convents of their respective nations, sometimes where they can, for want of room.

The church is usually open in Lent and at Easter. The pilgrims who come at those times never fail to find in the interior, close to the door, eight or ten Turks, who, squatting cross-legged on an enormous divan, tell stories, smoke, drink coffee, and never stop but to take their money before they permit any one to enter ; but when

the pilgrimage is over, that door is frequently unclosed for more than a month, and there is no other method of gaining admittance but paying a certain sum to those who keep the keys. Food and other necessaries are at such times handed in through an aperture made in the principal door of the church, but which is not large enough for any person to get through. At night it is further secured by an iron cross.

But to return to what relates to myself personally. The account of a little incident will explain to you much better than a thousand words would do, with what sentiments my soul was filled. On entering the church, I perceived the Fathers of the Holy Land, busy, broom in hand, sweeping down, in the utmost silence, the sides of the little edifice containing the sepulchre. I immediately took up a broom to assist them. A bit of rush having dropped off, I picked it up, and, looking at it, full of the thought of the Holy Sepulchre, and of the infinite goodness of God, I said to myself : “ If this rush could become in thy hands the sceptre of the world, on condition that thou shouldst not have been at Jerusalem, what wouldst thou do ? ” And He who holds my life and my being in his hands knew the answer of my heart !

To you, as well as to many other persons, this may appear silly. Your piety, however, authorises me to doubt it, my friend. At any rate, I declare to you that I would not exchange this silliness for all the goods of this world. I shall most carefully preserve that bit of rush.

My cell is not more than thirty paces from the tomb of our Saviour, and one hundred from Calvary. I hear the hymns of the Greeks, the Armenians, the Copts, the

Catholics, ascending from that altar of salvation—the hymns, in short, of all the pilgrims, who, bowing their heads in the dust, fervently repeat, each in his own idiom, the name of Jesus Christ.

When I step out of my cell into the gallery which adjoins it, I behold the precincts of the edifice containing the tomb of the Saviour, covered with prostrate pilgrims. What tears are shed near that sacred Sepulchre ! Oh ! what man, after leaving his country, his friends, his relatives, to come so far, amid so many dangers, to visit the tomb of his Lord, would not be deeply affected on approaching it ! . . . The women more especially, whose piety has something more touching and more tender, cannot help shedding floods of tears, while touching with their burning lips the steps that lead to the rock of the crucifixion.

Meanwhile, I prepared myself, in silence and prayer, to ascend Golgotha and to enter the Holy Sepulchre.

Two days had already passed, and I had not yet been able to approach those two hallowed and awful places. Still I adhered more firmly than ever to my resolution to be, in my first visit to them, alone with my God ; it was my wish to adore in the silence of complete solitude Him, who, by an ineffable prodigy of mercy towards his creatures, forsook the heavens to come to this very place to suffer and die. Unfortunately, a crowd of pilgrims who had recently arrived beset for two days and nights the church of the Holy Sepulchre, which they had paid the Turks a large fee to open.

At length, on the third day, the kind monks came to inform me that the church would not be open the whole

day, except for me ; and that, in concert with the Greek and Armenian sacristans, they had taken precautions for preventing the entrance of any person whatsoever, the whole time that I should be there.

On the 12th, at half past ten in the morning, the most profound silence reigned around Golgotha and the tomb of the Saviour. I went forth barefoot, and with a lighted taper in my hand to visit Calvary, and a few moments afterwards I ascended, trembling, the steps that led to it.

At one o'clock, still surrounded by a silence uninterrupted, save by the pulsations of my heart, I entered the Holy Sepulchre.

At three, some one came to apprise me that the Greeks were about to commence their service : I returned to my cell, and there shut myself up for the rest of the day.

Adieu, my friend, adieu, adieu !

LETTER XVI.

IMPRESSION MADE BY THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE—HISTORY OF THAT CHURCH—ITS DESTRUCTION BY FIRE—IT IS REBUILT BY THE GREEKS AND THE ARMENIANS—THEY OPPRESS THE LATINS—DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH—MASS IN THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre,
December 12th, 1831.

There is certainly nothing on earth so august and so sacred as the church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Christian who approaches it, especially for the first time,

without emotion is an insensible being, a being by himself. I should even doubt whether such a one ever existed, if it were not too certain that there have been seen travellers belonging to christendom, at least by baptism, who have made it an impious glory to enter these awful places with a levity full of insolence, casting around them looks of mingled curiosity and derision, measuring with daring eye what the pious crowd in its deep devotion scarcely presumed to contemplate, and having the air of being come, like the Jews, for the purpose of solemnly denying the Redemption, and telling Jesus Christ, as it were, to his face : “ We will not have thee to reign over us ! ”

The streets leading to the Holy Sepulchre are muddy, partly unpaved, and rather narrow. From whichever side you come, you are obliged to pass through a low and narrow doorway before you can reach the open space in front of the church.

The façade evidently dates from the time of the emperor Constantine ; it is irregular and disfigured by the buildings around it, buildings which form part of it, and which the Greeks and the Armenians have seized for themselves. Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, has preserved the letter in which Constantine orders Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, to build a magnificent church on the spot where the mystery of our redemption was accomplished. Three hundred years after its erection, this church was sacked by Chosroes II. king of Persia, and, unfortunately, the cross was carried off. Heraclius reconquered that inestimable treasure, and Modestus, bishop of Jerusalem, re-established the

church. Not long afterwards, the Caliph Omar made himself master of Jerusalem; but he showed favour to the Christians, who, during his reign, enjoyed the free exercise of their religion. In 1009, Hakem, sultan of Egypt, destroyed once more the holy places. From that period they suffered more or less till the memorable time when the Crusaders, in 1099, gained possession of Jerusalem, and rescued the tomb of Christ from the hands of infidels.

God did not permit the holy city to continue long in the power of the Christians: at the expiration of ninety-nine years it was retaken by the Musulmans. The Christians then sacrificed their property with joy to redeem the church of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidels. In 1257 the Franciscan Fathers came to Palestine, and quietly undertook the care of it, as well as of the other sanctuaries; but they were obliged to withdraw on the approach of Sultan Melek Seraf, who, at the head of a considerable army, took the city on the 4th of May, in the same year, and put twenty-five thousand Christians to the sword. The Latins, horror-struck at this barbarity, and relentlessly persecuted by that cruel prince, quitted Palestine and Syria.

As soon, however, as it was possible, the Franciscan Fathers returned clandestinely to the sanctuaries which they had been forced to abandon to the profanation and the insults of the enemies of the Lord. The ancient chronicles expressly say that the reverend Father Rogerio Guarini, proceeding in 1333 from Aquitaine to Armenia, passed through Egypt; and that, at this solicitation, the sultan granted permission for a small number of monks

to dwell in safety near the Holy Sepulchre. Other historians state the same fact: "The custody of the sepulchre of Christ at Jerusalem was in the year 1333 committed to eight Franciscans by the sultan of Egypt."*

In spite, however, of the assurances given to Father Guarini, and even in spite of the favourable disposition of the sultan then reigning, the Franciscans were incessantly annoyed till the year 1342, when, through the protection of Robert, king of Sicily, and his consort, queen Sancia, they were permitted, on payment of enormous sums, to have at Jerusalem a permanent establishment by the church, to celebrate the holy mysteries and to perform divine service there, with the certainty of not being exposed to further vexations.

The church of the Holy Sepulchre was almost totally consumed by fire on the 12th of October, 1808. I am sure that I shall gratify you by here transcribing an extract from an account of that conflagration, addressed at the time by an Italian monk, an eye-witness, to one of his friends. You will find in it things which disdainful incredulity will always refuse to believe, but which, for the friend of truth, are not on that account the less incontestable. I have collected here all the information capable of enlightening and leading to an entire conviction. I have questioned men who saw every thing, men of great virtue, of perfect sincerity, veterans full of the fear of God, and whose age warned them to hold themselves in readiness to appear at any moment before the Supreme Judge; and I declare to you, in his divine

* Genebrardus in *Chronographia*, lib. iv.

presence, that these witnesses agreed unanimously in their reports.

NARRATIVE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE BY FIRE, ON THE
12TH OF OCTOBER, 1808.

“ If the prophet Jeremiah could return to this world, would he have, in these days of disaster and mourning, less reason than of old to exhort the people to weep over the woes of distressed Jerusalem? Would he have less plaintive lamentations to utter over the sorrows and the dejection of the unfortunate daughter of Zion? Ah! he would not be the only one whose eyes would be two well-springs of tears! . . . Every where he would find companions of his grief!

“ The morning of the 12th of October was terrible; the recollection of that calamitous day extorts a cry of anguish from the most indifferent, the most obdurate, hearts. Catholics, Schismatics, Heretics, are in affliction; Orientals and Occidentals are weeping; the Jews themselves shed tears; there is not a creature in the holy city, be he of what nation soever he may, but shares the general grief and consternation. The church of the Holy Sepulchre, that monument erected by St. Helena and Constantine with imperial magnificence, and preserved with pious care by the Christians — that temple, the most august in the world — that temple, which was the admiration of the most distant nations, has just been consumed by fire! It is not known whether this is the effect of accident or design: but such was the rapidity of the flames that, in the space of a few hours, the galleries,

the columns, the altars, were annihilated. Here are some particulars of that deplorable event.

“ On the 12th of October, about three in the morning, the fire was first discovered in the chapel of the Armenians, situated on the gallery or terrace of the great church of the Holy Sepulchre. The assistant-sacristan of the monks of St. Francis, who was going to attend to the lamps and to visit the chapel of the Calvary, was the first who perceived it; and as there was not a living soul there but a poor Armenian priest, an old man, on whom the sight of the fire had such an effect as seemingly to derange his reason, he instantly ran in quest of assistance. But the rapidity of the flames rendered it useless; when it arrived, they had already enveloped the chapel of the Armenians, and even their habitation, as well as that of the Greeks, part of which was built of wood, covered with oil paint.

“ The Franciscan Fathers, after the midnight service, had retired to rest; aroused by the strange noise which they heard in the great church, they rose in haste: what was their consternation! In spite of a thousand dangers, they flew to the fire The door was closed; and to aggravate their despair to the utmost, a few moments afterwards the flames burst forth from the side of the Greeks and the Armenians, and from the side of the Syrians, Messineans, and Copts, threatening the cupola of the great church, built with prodigious beams, covered with lead, and raised perpendicularly over the monument in which the most Holy Sepulchre is situated. The timbers, which I have just mentioned, were brought at a great expence from Mount Lebanon, at the be-

ginning of the last century, when the Christian princes furnished the means for erecting this dome, a real master-piece for its height and the boldness of its construction.

“ All had fled . . . The Franciscan Fathers being alone left, and destitute of necessary implements, strove to get through a little window, with the intention of giving the alarm to the monastery of St. Saviour and to the ministers of the Turkish government. Meanwhile, the young catholic Arabs on the outside got into the interior and defied the flames, in order to save whatever they could. But at this moment the fire gained the dome, the altars of the Virgin, and the organ : the church resembled a furnace. The pilasters soon fell with a crash, and with them the arcades and pillars around the Holy Sepulchre : a shower of lead poured down upon it ; so fierce was the fire that the thickest marble columns were cloven, as well as the pavement and the marble which cover the monument. At length, between five and six o'clock, the great dome fell with a tremendous noise, carrying with it all the massive columns and the pilasters which still supported the gallery of the Greeks, and likewise the habitations of the Turks near the dome.

“ The most Holy Sepulchre was now buried beneath a mountain of fire, which must, one would conceive, destroy it for ever : the church looked like a volcano at the time of eruption.

“ After the account of so great a misfortune, I am happy to be able to console your piety by relating to you the wonders of the divine assistance in favour of the monks of St. Francis.

“The fire, having reached the wooden door which separates the altar of Mary Magdalen from the chapel of the choir of the great church, spared the sacristy, and every thing in it : neither the little monastery of those venerable Fathers, nor the cells which it contains, nor the chapel, received the slightest injury.

“None of the marble, at the spot where Jesus appeared after his resurrection to Mary Magdalen, has been damaged, though the fire was extremely fierce on that side, burning the organ, and breaking and calcining the marble about it.

“That chapel of the Holy Sepulchre which is served by the Franciscans, though situated beneath the dome, and consequently in the centre of the conflagration, and buried in the flames, has not suffered any injury in the interior : the silks which adorned it, and even the cords of the lamps, were found again ; the excellent picture of the resurrection, on canvas, which closes the Holy Sepulchre, was untouched ; though the chapel of the Copts, adjoining to that monument, was reduced to ashes.

“In the chapel of the Angel, which is at the entrance of the Holy Sepulchre, there was nothing burned but half the velvet which served to adorn it : the walls and the pavement sustained no damage.

“At the chapel of the Calvary, the statue of the blessed Virgin, which stood between the altar of the Purification and that of the Exaltation of the Cross, was preserved uninjured. That statue was a gift from the king of Portugal.

“The spot where our Lord was crucified belongs to the catholics ; it has suffered little injury. The same

cannot be said of the place where the cross was erected, and which is in the possession of the Greeks. It is a most remarkable circumstance that, notwithstanding the violence with which the wind was then blowing, notwithstanding the vicinity of a window which was likely to favour the ravages of the flames, the chapel contiguous externally to that of the Copts suffered no injury.

“This chapel, built on the spot where the blessed Virgin stood with the other Maries when the Jews were fastening her Son to the cross, is unharmed ; and the picture representing her, though so near to the fire, has likewise escaped without damage.

“ At six o'clock the violence of the conflagration began to subside ; and at nine it was no longer dangerous or threatening.

“On the following day, when the rubbish could be cleared away, it excited fresh astonishment to discover that the holy stone which covers the stone of the Unction, and which was supposed to be calcined, had not suffered. No lives were lost, but some of the brethren were hurt.”

Such, my dear friend, is the lamentable disaster, as far as one can convey an idea of it in so brief an extract, which in 1808 afflicted Jerusalem, and the mere account of which would, in better times, have overwhelmed the Christian world with consternation. I repeat to you that I questioned the monks who were present at this terrible catastrophe ; all of them assured me of the accuracy of these details. I addressed myself more particularly to a venerable Spaniard, Father Giuseppe Dommegue, who

was in the sepulchre itself at the time of the fire, and who has added some other interesting details to those which I have just given you respecting that event. On the following day, the Fathers of St. Francis went, according to custom, to the Holy Sepulchre to tell their beads, but sobs would not allow them to finish. On the 14th, they performed mass there. Notwithstanding the ruins which surrounded them, they suspended none of their customary devotions and processions; if they had to walk over rubbish, they sang not the less diligently the mercies of the Lord.

The church of the Holy Sepulchre has been rebuilt. But, as the catholic monks are extremely poor, and they were not furnished for this purpose with supplies proportionate to the magnitude of the undertaking, they have been obliged to relinquish the honour to the Greeks and the Armenians, who, being very wealthy, were able to execute it at their own cost. Their opulence procures for them, from the Ottoman Porte, facilities and privileges which the Fathers of the Holy Land cannot obtain.

This inability of the Latins to take a principal part in the rebuilding of the church has prejudiced them in a way that cannot but afflict a catholic heart. Formerly the sole possessors of the greater part of the holy places, they have found themselves constrained to share with strangers that inestimable treasure, of which they had so long been the only masters, and which they alone had defended against the Turks, at the risk of their blood and their lives.

The Greeks and the Armenians assert that the expence, including the presents which they were obliged

to make in order to obtain the necessary firmans, exceeds fourteen millions of piasters, or about five millions of francs (upwards of £200,000 sterling).

The Greeks, strong in their wealth, never have employed, neither do they still employ, it but to oppress the Latins, whom they view with the same eye as a haughty conqueror views a vanquished nation. One word from the catholic princes to the Sublime Porte would suffice to put an end to this state of things ; but that word none has the courage to utter. A minister of a great power at Constantinople, to whom a zealous missionary was making, in the name of the crucified Jesus, humble remonstrances on the lamentable state of the holy places, at the same time imploring his powerful protection, replied : “ What ! for the sake of four stones would you turn Europe and Asia topsy-turvy ! ” A sacrilegious answer, and the more absurd, inasmuch as nothing more was solicited than a mere recommendation to the Ottoman ministry.

Follow me now, my dear friend ; we will go together over the church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The gloom that pervades the interior strikes the pilgrim at the very moment of crossing the threshold, and prepares him in some degree for the extraordinary impressions that he is about to receive.

The first object that he has before him is the stone of the Unction, upon which the body of our Lord was perfumed with myrrh and aloes, before it was deposited in the tomb. It is elevated but a few inches above the floor, and is about eight feet in length, and two broad. As some pilgrims took the liberty to break pieces off, it

has been covered with a red marble : a ball of copper gilt adorns each of the four corners ; ten lamps are continually burning above it ; on either side are enormous candelabra, with wax-candles from fifteen to twenty feet high ; they belong to the catholics, the Greeks, and the Armenians, who have this sanctuary in common, and who come daily in turn to burn incense there.

On the right of the entrance to the church, and twelve paces from the stone of the Unction, is Calvary. It is about eighteen or twenty feet above the level of the ground ; two flights of twenty-one steps lead up to it on either side. The top is now converted into two chapels, cased with marble, separated by an arcade, and the floors of which are likewise of marble. One of them especially bears the name of the chapel of Calvary. It belongs to the Greeks, and is constantly lighted by a great number of lamps. Here was erected the holy cross, that on which Jesus, condemned to the most cruel and ignominious of punishments, deigned to suffer and to die for us, so much did he love us ! The place is covered with an altar, under which you must stoop down to see it. I have seen it, my friend ; I have seen that awful and sacred spot ; I have pressed my lips to it ; and human language cannot furnish words to express to you what then passed in my heart. Stop, Charles ! give up reading for a moment, or rather let us both pause, and in solemn devotion sigh and adore — sigh over that consummation of iniquity on the part of men ; adore that consummation of love on the part of God.

According to tradition, Christ had his face turned to-

wards the west, and Jerusalem behind him. Two round black stones mark the spots where the crosses of the thieves were planted. These two crosses were not placed in a line with that of the Saviour: they formed with it a sort of triangle, so that Christ could see the two criminals crucified near him.

Not far from the place where the cross stood, is to be seen one of the rocks that were cleft when Christ expired. "Rocks were cleft," says the Gospel, and the prodigy is still visible and striking; it speaks to every eye. The cleft in the rock is exposed to view, and is seen through a trelliswork of silver.

The other chapel, which forms part of Calvary, belongs to the Latins. This is the place where the sacrilegious hands of the executioners fastened our Saviour to the cross. Here the holy mysteries are daily celebrated. Before the altar are inlaid, in the pavement, ornaments in mosaic of different colours, among which red predominates, as if to indicate that this was the spot which was dyed by the precious blood of our Lord. Here, too, a great quantity of lamps are kept incessantly burning.

To the right of the altar is a barred window, looking into an exterior chapel, dedicated to Notre Dame des Douleurs, to which every day before dawn a monk of St. Saviour's repairs to perform mass. It was to this place that the blessed Virgin retired during the bloody preparations for the last torments reserved for her son. What other place ever witnessed a grief equal to that of such a mother! What other mother ever heard so close at hand the redoubled blows of hammers driving

sharp nails into the hands of her son, piercing the feet of him to whom she had given birth !

Descending from Calvary and turning to the right, you come to a chapel four paces in length and two and a half wide, which belongs to the Greeks. There, beneath the altar, you see the pillar of reviling (*degli Improperi*). It is of grey marble, spotted with black. It is only a fragment of a larger pillar, the other part of which is at Rome, in the church of St. Praxeda, exposed to the devotion of the faithful. It was on this fragment of the pillar that the Jews made our Saviour sit while they crowned him with thorns, smote him on the face after blindfolding him, and said to him in barbarous derision : “ Prophecy who is it that smote thee.”

Twenty-five paces further you descend by a flight of thirty steps to the chapel of St. Helena, which belongs to the Armenians. It is spacious, and surmounted by a cupola, which is supported by four columns of unequal thickness. You see on the left the spot where St. Helena remained in prayer during the search that was made by her order for the discovery of the true cross. On the right, and in the same chapel, but twelve steps lower, is a small sanctuary belonging to the Latins ; this is the place where was at length found the august sign of the redemption.

The history of the discovery of the holy cross is too generally known, my dear friend, for me to suppose that you are not acquainted with it. There are, nevertheless, certain particulars which have been omitted by more than one historian ; and which, I dare say, you will not be displeased to find here. If I should merely call to

your mind something that you already know, I am certain that you would read what I write with that warm interest which piety takes in the things of God, and especially in the ineffable wonders of his love for us.

I observed to you in one of my last letters, that in the Holy Land every thing tells of St. Helena and the monuments which she there founded : for fifteen centuries Palestine has rung with her name. Mother of the prince, who, after three hundred years of persecution, first raised Christianity to the throne with himself, and with whom modern incredulity has contested the title of Great, only out of hatred to Jesus Christ ; the illustrious empress could not see her son triumph by the *cross*, without feeling like him a profound gratitude and an ardent zeal for the glory of Him whose miraculous protection that sign had announced to him ; hence the tender devotion of mother and son for the holy places.

Having become peaceable master of the empire by the defeat of Maxentius, Constantine resolved to erect a magnificent temple to Jesus Christ on the very spot which the Jews had chosen for the scene of his ignominious execution. In 326 he committed the fulfilment of this intention to St. Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, directing Dracilianus, deputy of the prefect of the Prætorium and governor of the province, to procure for the bishop all the requisite workmen and materials, promising himself to send pillars, costly marbles, precious stones, gold, and all the ornaments necessary for making it the richest temple in the world.

Helena determined to take part in so glorious an undertaking. Not deterred by the fatigues of a long voy-

age, she set out at the age of seventy-nine for Palestine, with the intention of concurring to the utmost of her power, by her largesses not less than by her advice, in the great work of her son. On seeing the deplorable state in which Calvary was, she all at once felt animated with an ardent desire to find the cross of the Saviour; and, full of this idea, she forthwith set about accomplishing it. The difficulties were such as would have daunted a less generous zeal: none knew what had become of the cross; no mention is found of it in history, either before or after the destruction of Jerusalem. Some asserted that it had been hidden and secured from profanation by the care of the apostles and the first Christians. Others, and these were most numerous, had no doubt that it had been buried in a hole dug near the tomb, according to the custom of the Jews. But where was the site of the tomb? on this point there was no certain indication. To disfigure the place, the pagans had thrown upon the hill heaps of mould, stones, and rubbish. Subsequently, under Adrian, they had there erected a statue to Jupiter, and built a temple to Venus, persuaded that the Christians, who abhorred the impure worship of that goddess, would thereby be for ever prevented from repairing thither to adore their crucified God.

By order of Helena, whose researches are said to have been directed by an inhabitant of Jerusalem, the statues and the infamous temple were demolished, and the materials carried outside the city. On digging deeper at several points, they came at length to the Holy Sepulchre, and close to it were discovered three crosses

buried in the ground ; apart from them were three nails, with which the feet and hands of the Saviour had been pierced, and likewise the inscription as recorded by the evangelists. Heaven soon made known by a miracle which was the instrument of redemption. By the advice of Macarius, the body of a female sick unto death was touched by each of the crosses. The touch of the first two had no effect ; that of the third instantly cured her. To this prodigy of divine mercy was added another still more striking, related by St. Paulinus and Sulpicius Severus : when applied to a corpse, the true cross restored it to life.

St. Helena, happy in having found that treasure on which her heart set a higher value than on all the splendours of the world, hastened to adore in that sacred wood, as St. Ambrose tells us, not the wood itself, but the King of Glory who had been fastened to it. After this solemn homage, she lost no time in sending a large piece of it to her son, who received so precious a gift with as much joy as respect, and resolved to place the fragment beneath his helmet, to serve him for a safeguard in battle. She caused the other part to be encased in silver, and committed the care of it to the bishop of Jerusalem. The practice was soon introduced of exhibiting it publicly, on Good Friday, to the veneration of the believers. On that day the bishop first went and prostrated himself before it ; after him the clergy and the people ; and it is from this custom that the ceremony performed annually on that day in all the catholic churches is derived — a ceremony in which the officiating minister, uncovering the cross, addresses the

Christian congregation in these words, so calculated to fill them with grief, gratitude, and love : “ Behold the wood of the cross on which was suspended the *salvation* of the world ! Come, let us adore ! ”

I have been longer, my dear friend, than I intended, in describing to you, while treating of the chapel of St. Helena, all the objects at Jerusalem which so powerfully move the heart. I must not, however, omit to introduce here a fact which philosophic philanthropy would not have failed to publish and to blazon abroad by means of all the trumpets of Fame, had it belonged to a pagan or an infidel prince, but which it has feigned not so much as to perceive in the first of the Christian emperors. It is this — that to Constantine is due the suppression of the most cruel as well as the most ignominious of punishments. Inspired by his reverence for the cross, he forbade the crucifixion of malefactors ; the tribunals obeyed, and since that time this species of punishment has been excluded from the criminal code of every Christian nation I resume.

In the same line, but ten paces farther than the chapel of St. Helena, you meet with another built on the very spot where the soldiers divided among them the garments of Christ. Every time I happen to pass it, my friend, a certain blended feeling of horror and fear thrills my whole being I represent to myself Mary, that kind and fond mother, at the foot of the cross, a prey to sorrows so much the keener, inasmuch as her heart alone is capable of comprehending, of feeling, all the outrages perpetrated on her son, all the afflictions which he endures ; and I behold soldiers, at

the moment when they have just witnessed such poignant anguish, in presence of a concourse in which compassion has silenced hatred ; when all Nature puts on mourning ; when the rocks themselves appear to feel — I behold soldiers, engrossed by a single thought, that of filthy lucre, disputing, with hideous eagerness, the possession of the bloody prize, throwing the dice, and leaving the lot to decide to which of them the tunic of the august victim shall belong ! O, my God !

Forty paces farther, making a slight curve, you come to the spot where Christ appeared in the semblance of a gardener to Mary Magdalen, after his resurrection. An altar has been erected there.

Opposite is the chapel of the Appearance, belonging to the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Land. It is thus named, because, according to the traditions, it was there that our Saviour appeared to St. Mary for the first time after his resurrection.

On leaving this chapel you perceive a magnificent rotunda, surrounded by eighteen massive pilasters, which support a gallery and a majestic dome. In the centre, and beneath the dome, where the light which illumines the interior is admitted, rises a structure or mausoleum of yellow and white marble, in the form of a *catafalque*. Beneath this monument is the Sepulchre of Jesus Christ.

The entrance is towards the east. When you have passed the door, you find yourself in the chapel of the Angel, the inner walls of which are completely lined with marble. In the middle stands a pedestal, supporting a stone, eighteen inches square, upon which was seated the angel on the day of the resurrection, when the holy

women came to embalm the body of Jesus, and he said to them : “ He is risen, he is not here.”

Does it not seem to you, my dear friend, that, by the very arrangement of this place, by the thoughts of joy and life which it excites, the goodness of God designed to temper the too painful impressions which the sudden sight of the tomb of Jesus would have produced ? and is there not, as it were, an angel’s voice heard there, saying to the Christian as to the holy women : “ Be of good cheer ; he is risen, he is not here.”

Opposite to the pedestal you see an aperture, or door, that is very low and still narrower, whence proceeds a strong light. You cannot pass it without bending nearly double. It leads into a closet, about six feet square, and nearly eight high, lighted by forty lamps, the smoke from which escapes by three holes made in the vaulted roof.

On the right you see a marble table, as long as the closet, and half as wide, that is to say, six feet by three. This closet is the Holy Sepulchre ; that table, the sepulchral table on which was laid the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, the head turned towards the west, and the feet to the east. The tomb and table are chiselled out of the solid rock ; they have been covered with marble, to preserve them from the indiscretion of the pilgrims, who sometimes used to take the pious liberty of breaking off and carrying away fragments of them.

The Franciscan Fathers, the Greeks, and the Armenians, perform mass daily in the Holy Sepulchre, each in turn, with great exactness and in perfect order. The Copts officiate behind the monument, in a chapel of

wood, rudely constructed : all come several times a day to burn incense in the holy places with pomp and solemnity.

Opposite to the monument you perceive the church of the Greeks, which is extremely magnificent and in tolerably good taste, though gilding has been lavished upon it to excess. The stalls, of common wood, are scarcely in keeping with the riches by which they are surrounded : the pictures are numerous, and in general bad, and the statues middling. The whole, however, is striking, and one cannot help admiring its beauty. You remark in the middle a circle of marble, in the centre of which is a little pillar that marks, according to them, the centre of the earth !

The church of the Armenians, built in the part of the arcades belonging to them, is likewise very beautiful.

Extraordinary circumstance ! — the Catholics, the Greeks, the Armenians, who inhabit Lebanon, in short, all the Christian nations, have at Jerusalem representatives whose voices are incessantly rising with incense towards that God who sacrificed his only son to save the world. One single voice does not there murmur the name of Jesus Christ ! It is that of the Protestant !

Ever since I shut myself up in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, I have not ceased, my dear friend, to explore the different parts of this immense building. The soul, especially at first, is, as it were, overwhelmed with the grandeur and the sanctity of the objects which surround it. One must have lived some days here, and become, in a manner, accustomed to the place, to find one's self in such a tone of mind as to be able to observe things

closely, to seize the impressions which they leave behind, and to render an account of them to one's self.

For offering my adoration to the Saviour of the world, I love in preference the silence and the darkness of night, when the pilgrims have retired, when I have no light but that of a few lamps, and when I cannot hear my own footfalls.

In squeezing between the pillars which surround the tomb of our Lord, in passing the stone of the Unction, in ascending Golgotha, methinks I hear a voice crying on every side to me as to Moses : " Draw not nigh hither : put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground ! "

I have had the happiness to attend every day, and, in general, to take the communion, at the solemn mass which the Fathers perform at five o'clock in the Holy Sepulchre. Those who sing stay outside ; but the priest officiates in the tomb itself, on a portable altar which is removed after the ceremony.

I begin to get there too early ; and, kneeling before the tomb, I await the arrival of the priest. When he appears, as I am obliged to retire for want of room, I place myself, with a taper in my hand, on the spot where the beloved apostle stooped down to see whether it was true that the body of the Lord had been removed as Magdalen had told him. Presently, those harmonious strains of the singers ; those tender or plaintive sighs of the organ ; that deep devotion of the monks ; that sacred tomb which is before my eyes, and only a couple of paces from my heart, throbbing with gratitude and love ; those clouds of incense rising around the altar of the minister of the

Most High—all this penetrates, ravishes, intoxicates me with a sort of happiness, all the transports of which I shall never be able to describe.

Adieu, my very dear friend, adieu !



LETTER XVII.

PILGRIMS AT JERUSALEM — CHILDREN OF THE PILGRIMS — PROCESSION — TOMB OF GODFREY AND BALDWIN — SWORD OF GODFREY — JERUSALEM TAKEN BY THE EGYPTIANS — FAVOUR SHOWN BY THEM TO THE CHRISTIANS — INFLUENCE OF MONEY IN THE COUNTRIES RULED BY THE KORAN.

Jerusalem, Church of the Holy Sepulchre,
December 23d, 1831.

You cannot form any idea, my dear friend, of the number of pilgrims, Greeks, Armenians, Maronites, &c., who flock to Jerusalem to visit the holy places. At this moment they are computed at nearly four thousand, and the number is daily increasing ; at Easter it will be much greater still : some of them come from the remotest countries : St. Petersburg, and even the farthest extremities of Russia furnish their's. They usually pass Lent here, and it is not till after Easter that they set out on their return home.

When I cast my eyes on this multitude, and count the catholic pilgrims, I am astounded, stupified. In four thousand we are guess how many. — Six hundred ; four hundred ; two hundred, at least, you will say. — You are wrong. We are . . . four : a Polish shoemaker of Odessa, with his wife, another Pole, and your humble servant. And among the ten thousand

who, as I have told you, are likely to be here in Lent, a number that is not exaggerated, I do not suppose that there will be twenty foreign catholics !

Beside this indifference place the following trait : last year there came to Jerusalem a Greek with his wife, who had lost the use of all her limbs. Well, this man was seen everywhere, even in processions, carrying his wife on his back, praying with her and for her. The first time that he crossed the threshold of the Holy Sepulchre, some Turks began to laugh and turn him into ridicule, but this indecent mockery was soon converted into the warmest admiration.

Let people extol as much as they please those two sons whom antiquity exhibits to us harnessing themselves to their mother's car, drawing her to the temple, and then expiring from fatigue ; the husband of this poor cripple is a much greater hero in my estimation. They were certain of gaining admiration, and somewhat of pagan pride might mingle with their filial piety ; he had to bear up against ridicule and mockery, and his conduct could not have any other motive than the love of God, and a holy confidence in his infinite goodness.

The pilgrims who have families frequently bring with them three or four children. Nothing can be more interesting than to see these little creatures with their parents. They imitate all their motions ; they repeat in particular their numerous salutations, always bowing down to the very ground, and, like them, incessantly making the sign of the cross.

Do not wonder, my dear friend, that I occasionally make mention of the little children : I love them, if I

dare say so, as the kind Jesus loved them-When I see those innocents, methinks I hear my Saviour saying: "Suffer the little children to come unto me," and declaring that whosoever is not or does not become like one of them shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. One day I witnessed the arrival of one of these families, which appeared to me truly worthy of all the admiration of a religious and feeling mind: to me the sight was curious and interesting. Adorned with a rich saddle and panniers, balanced only by four small children, an ass advanced proudly bearing the joyous family. In the middle, on the back of the animal domicile, was seated a graceful girl, not more than seven years old, above her brothers: the father was on foot. Figure to yourself these five pretty little pilgrims, whose light hair floated in the breeze; and then cast your eyes on that worthy father, who, walking by their side, played with them while talking to them of God, and relating to them, in language suited to their comprehension, the history of the infant Jesus; then listening with delight to their infant tongues lisping forth *Bethlehem*, the *stable*, the *manger*, and other remarkable things which they would soon see — and tell me if you, too, would not have been charmed, enchanted.

I know not whether I have already told you that every day different nations successively go in procession to the sanctuaries inclosed in the church of the Holy Sepulchre. The day before yesterday, at that of the Greeks, among the torches borne by the pilgrims, I observed one so much higher than the rest that I conceived it must be in the hands of a giant. I approached, but what was my

surprise to see that it was only a fine little boy, mounted on his mother's shoulders, and carrying a taper. She was a Greek woman, who, moving on steadily and quietly with her precious burden, prayed devoutly with the other pilgrims.

I had a particular longing to see the tombs of the two great heroes of the Christians—Godfrey, the terror of the Musulmans, who, a thousand times, defied death for the sake of his God ; and, when proclaimed king after victory, declared that he would never wear a crown of gold where Jesus Christ had worn a crown of thorns : and Baldwin, his brother, who, nobly walking in his steps, was worthy to succeed him. I desired to be conducted to them, but they had disappeared ; not the least vestige of them is left. The Greeks, who have rebuilt the church, not only took no care of those precious monuments which the flames had spared, but have even covered with plaster the following inscriptions, which the pilgrim could not look at or read without respect :—

HIC JACET INCLYTUS DUX GODOFRIDUS DE
BULION, QUI TOTAM ISTAM TERRAM ACQUI-
SIVIT CULTUI CHRISTIANO, CUJUS ANIMA
REGNET CUM CHRISTO. AMEN.

REX BALDUINUS, JUDAS ALTER MACHABEUS,
SPES PATRIÆ, VIGOR ECCLESIAE, VIRTUS UTRIVSQUE,
QUEM FORMIDABANT, CUI DONA TRIBUTA FEREBANT,
CEDAR ET ÆGYPTUS, DAN, AC HOMICIDA DAMASCUS,
PROH DOLOR ! IN MODICO CLAUDITUR HOC TUMULO.

In this point, as in many others, the Greeks have acted from passion : these monuments belonged to the

Latins, and that of itself was cause sufficient for their proscription. But what do I say? — they belonged to the Latins! No; they were the property of the catholic world; and the destroyers will transmit the shame of this violation and outrage to their latest posterity.

I knew that, at least, Godfrey's sword and his spurs had been saved, and that they were in the possession of the Fathers; I begged to be shown them. This sword, they consider, and with good reason, as a most valuable treasure. I was conducted, after divine service, to the place where it has rested for eight centuries... I looked at it for a long time with respect; I felt a desire to touch it. I hesitated Did it become me to grasp the sword of him, who, kindling anew the ardour of the ancient faith, rescued from the hands of infidels the tomb of the Son of God? At last, I could not withstand the impulse to draw it from its scabbard, to examine it, and to raise it to my lips Then, turning towards the Holy Sepulchre, I thrice saluted with it the sacred tomb for which it fought; and I afterwards saluted with it the spot where lie the ashes of the hero.

The iron hilt of this sword was formerly gilt; some traces of the gilding are still perceptible. The weapon is very heavy, and very long. The morocco sheath, in which it is kept, is modern; the good Fathers meant this for an honour, but, in my opinion, it is a disfigurement.

For four or five days past, Jerusalem has been in consternation. The Egyptians are coming to make themselves masters of it. This will be the nineteenth time that it has been taken; eighteen times it has been

pillaged; what will be its fate now? The Turks of these parts, and the Arabs, are furious. Those drums, those fifes, those bayonets, now adopted by their enemies, and, in general, every approach to the European military system, are held in abhorrence by them. On the other hand, as the conqueror shows great favour to the Christians, they are apprehensive lest, if they continue subject to him, they may be forced to renounce those vexations of every kind which they conceive that they have a right to exercise, and the practice which they pursue of daily extorting money from persons destitute of protection, who have no other resource against pillage and murder than the cash in their purses. These apprehensions have become the more serious, in consequence of an order just issued by Ibrahim, enjoining the Christians to refuse immediately all kinds of tribute and exactions.

Is this conduct of Ibrahim's inspired by a laudable feeling of generosity and tolerance? or may it not rather be an artifice to win the Christians, an artifice which may very probably cloak the intention of plundering them by and by? I am afraid so, nay, I believe so. It is my opinion, too, that the convents, that of the Latins in particular, ought not all at once to give up paying the Turks what they have so long paid them; they might pay less, but at any rate it might be well to pay something: for, if Egypt is ever forced to quit Palestine, the extortions would have no bounds, and the imagination could not anticipate any thing too terrible as the certain result of a refusal.

Besides, the holy city is by no means completely reduced: the citadel still holds out, and will not surrender;

the commander has declared that all his men will bury themselves under the ruins of the fortress rather than capitulate, unless the arrears of their pay, owing by the Pacha of Acre, are discharged. Then only will they open their gates and submit ; but, first of all, the money down. The firing of cannon at intervals proclaims, in fact, their firm resolution to die rather than renounce what is due to them.

In all countries money has a malignant influence : among almost all the nations of the globe, money is become an idol ; and, though this metal god has not the power to make men truly happy, it is to him that they every where look for happiness.

Nowhere has this baleful deity more altars than in Turkey, and in the countries subject to the Koran ; nowhere are more victims immolated to him. The Arab and the Turk sacrifice every thing to filthy lucre : with them nothing is more precious than gold, and, if they had no other means of ensuring the possession of a tolerable sum than by giving a considerable portion of their life in exchange for it, I doubt whether they would hesitate long. This remark applies to all, to the high as well as to the low, to the magistrates as well as to private individuals. A man who has just passed sentence on a robber proceeds straightway, and himself lays a convent under contribution, and he pursues this system of plunder till, summoned in his turn before the tribunal of the pacha, he finds himself stripped of his property and obliged to submit his head to the axe of the executioner ; and no sooner has that head rolled in the dust, no sooner is the money confiscated, than in comes a

messenger from Constantinople, bearing the fatal bow-string, and an order from the sultan to strangle the pacha : I leave you to guess why.

The orders formerly sent by the sultan were so highly respected, that he to whom the fatal cord was brought received it as coming from the Prophet himself : he saw the will of God in that of the Grand Signor, the head of his religion, and had no doubt that if he obeyed immediately, and without a murmur, he should pass forthwith into the enjoyment of everlasting felicity : he was like a lamb which suffered itself to be led to the slaughter. This sentence of death he frequently received during a banquet, an entertainment, amidst his harem, surrounded by his wives and his children. He rose, kissed the firman that decreed his death, lifted it to his head in token of obedience, stepped into the next room, performed the prescribed ablutions, said his prayers, and tendered his neck to the bow-string.

Now-a-days necessity, rather than humanity, has rendered this kind of punishment infinitely more rare, if, however, it has not caused it to be proscribed altogether. Respect for the will of the representative of the Prophet is not now carried to such a length as to ensure docility ; and the envoy commissioned to carry the fatal cord, if he were to attempt to perform his errand, might deem himself fortunate if he did not pay with his own head for the hardihood of having undertaken it.

LETTER XVIII.

DEPARTURE FOR BETHLEHEM — ROAD — PLAIN OF RAPHAÏM — GREEK MONASTERY OF ELIJAH — RACHEL'S TOMB — VIEW OF BETHLEHEM — THE HOLY GROTTO.

Bethlehem, January 4th, 1832.

Christmas approached. The reverend Father warden of the Holy Sepulchre had already gone to Bethlehem with the greater part of the community, for the purpose of celebrating there so important a day on the very spot where the Son of God deigned to be born.

Being urged to share their happiness, I set out on the 23rd, at three in the afternoon, accompanied by a dragoon and a janissary. I rode a superb Arab mare, full of spirit; and yet I only walked her, lest, by a too rapid pace, I should lose the pleasure of observing any thing of interest which the country might present for my mind and my heart. Oh! how different were my feelings from those with which I approached Jerusalem! Then I was drawing near to a city under a curse, to a city where every thing reminds you of the excruciating torments and the ignominious death of the Saviour; and my afflicted soul beheld there nought save spots stained with the blood of the august victim, or instruments of his cruel execution — a Prætorium, a Calvary, a crown of thorns, whips, nails, a cross! — and I fancied that I could still see and hear a ruthless populace repeatedly shouting “Blood! blood!” and ferocious executioners bent on spilling blood and what blood, gracious God!!!

But Bethlehem! All my life, that name of itself

had produced in me impressions of a pure joy, of an inexpressible charm. Never had I heard it uttered, never had I uttered it myself, without a sort of thrill: judge then, my dear friend, you who are a Christian, a pious man, judge how much more vivid and delicious must have been the emotions of my soul as I approached it!

“ In a few moments my eyes will behold that Bethlehem, the name of which is so dear to me! They will behold it! They will behold that stable in which was born the fairest of the sons of men, the ruler of the universe, the word of life, my Saviour! They will behold that manger in which he was laid, wrapped in swaddling clothes; that manger, the only cradle that his mother had to give to such a son! They will behold the place, whither the shepherds of the neighbouring country, apprized by the voices of the angels, came to adore him; and that upon which knelt the kings of the East, brought by that miraculous star to pay homage to the King of kings, and to offer him their presents; and that where Mary, the incomparable mother, suckled her infant, warmed him at her bosom, pressed him to her heart.”

Thus did I inwardly say to myself, and with these thoughts which filled my soul were blended the fondest recollections of my childhood, of that age when the reading of the holy Scriptures constituted my chief delight; when the affecting histories of Abel, of Isaac, of Joseph, of the child Jesus, especially of his having but a handful of straw for his bed, and a stable for his palace, moved me to the bottom of my heart and moistened my eyes with tears; when a mother, whose name too was Mary, mingled with those admirable narratives the simple com-

mentaries of her piety and her tenderness, rendered sensible to my eyes by means of engravings what my too young understanding alone would not have thoroughly comprehended, answered my little questions, and never appeared more happy than when I dunned her with my innocent curiosity.

The road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, though not so bad as that from Rama to Jerusalem, is stony and unequal. It is only at long intervals that you meet with cultivated spots; the olive is the only tree that is seen, and that is very rare.

At the distance of a league and a half, and on the right, my guide pointed out to me the plain of Raphaim, so celebrated on account of the victory gained by David over the Philistines.

About half way is a Greek monastery which bears the name of the prophet Elijah. It is a paltry building, without any thing remarkable. In front of the monastery is a tree, the thick foliage of which shades a stone that, according to tradition, served the prophet for a bed. Not far thence, on the right, I perceived a small square building surmounted by a dome. "It is the tomb of Rachel," said my dragoman. It is possible that this monument may have been erected on the spot where Jacob's wife was buried; but that it dates back to the time of the patriarch, or that he erected any tomb at all for her, may be the more reasonably doubted, inasmuch as the Bible merely says that, on his return from Mesopotamia, when he was near Ephrath, Rachel died, and he buried her on the way to Ephrath. It is evident, moreover, from the mere inspection of the edifice, that it belongs to a much later period.

We pursued our route, and, a few steps farther, on the slope of a hill, that Bethlehem, so dear to my heart, suddenly burst upon my view. In the transport of my joy, I saluted thee, land of Judea, and, borrowing the language of the prophets, I exclaimed : “Thou art not the least among the cities of Judah ; for from thee shall go forth, and has actually gone forth, the chief of Israel, Jesus, my Saviour !”

As we advanced, the view became more lovely and delightful. Bethlehem, seated amidst the hills and the plains which surround it, presented a picturesque prospect : the fields irregularly divided, according to the extent of the different properties, and sometimes inclosed by walls, appeared to me better cultivated ; trees, the fig and the olive especially, were much more frequent. On the one hand, I perceived the mountains of Judea ; on the other, beyond the Dead Sea, those of Arabia Petræa ; the most unimportant objects captivated my whole attention. I stopped, I went forward, I turned back, I looked about, I mustered my recollections. In sight of that blessed land, of those plains, of those hills, I called to mind the rural manners of the patriarchs who dwelt there, their pastoral life, and the charming pictures of it left us in the Scripture. I thought of the ancestors of the Saviour, who had lived in these same parts ; of the boy David, tending his father’s flocks ; of Boaz, David’s grandfather ; of that admirable Moabite, whose name was destined, by the dispensation of God, to be inscribed in the genealogy of his Son ; of Ruth, gleaning the fields of him whom Heaven decreed for her husband ; that Ruth, whose touching history was well

worthy to become one of our canonical books, and for whom religious Poesy has thought that she could never choose colours sufficiently soft and vivid.

It was six o'clock when I reached the monastery where I was expected. I was informed that the most reverend Father warden of the Holy Sepulchre had gone with part of the community as far as Rachel's tomb to meet me. As I had not taken the same road, and had gone first one way and then another, I had not fallen in with him.

I am at Bethlehem ! at Bethlehem ! Amidst the attentions and the testimonies of a tender charity lavished upon me by the monks, my mind was occupied exclusively with one idea : I thought of nothing but the happiness of beholding the sacred Grotto. But, a stranger, unacquainted with the monastery, not knowing whether I must apply to the Turks for the keys, in spite of myself I appeared grave, absent, and my looks betrayed my fears and my preoccupations. And, besides, I wanted solitude, night, silence, as at the tomb of our Saviour, and on Golgotha. A good Father guessed what was passing within me : seeing me so pensive, " You wish, perhaps," said he, " to visit the holy places this evening ?" — " This very evening," I replied, " if there be nothing indiscreet in that wish, but as late as possible and alone." — " Well, wait till the community has retired to rest, and I will come and fetch you." He then accompanied me to the cell which had been prepared for me.

The lights were extinguished one by one in the monastery. In the cloister where my cell was situated, nought was to be heard save the vibration of the pen-

dulum of the clock, and the faint murmur of some of the monks praying beside their beds. Presently, the good Father Joseph came for me. I followed him with a lantern in my hand. We descended the great staircase, passed through several vaulted rooms, and arrived at the church. Turning thence to the right, we proceeded by a staircase cut out of the rock, and very narrow, to a winding way equally narrow, and still in the rock, where my guide pointed out to me an altar, and told me that beneath it is the tomb of the Holy Innocents. He was then directing my attention to another, when, impelled by a pious impatience, "I will look at that another time," said I, in a low tone; "let us proceed." We ascended some steps, and, having gone a few paces farther, we found ourselves before a door, which he hastily opened. I beheld a deep grotto, lighted by a great number of lamps. My guide withdrew and I, my soul moved by fear, respect, love, I entered, I fell on my knees, I prayed, I contemplated, I adored.

And those hours of night, during which I had watched near the manger of the Lamb without spot, reminded me of that night and that hour when the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks, when the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. Methought an angel said to me as to them, "Fear not:" I had felt the great joy which had been promised to them, because I was in the city of David, and on that very spot whither I had come to pray was born for me a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Like them I had found that sign given by

the messenger of the Most High—the stable, the manger, and the infant Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes. I had felt in my heart his divine presence, which the lapse of time had not permitted me to behold there; I blessed the happy hour of my life when I said: “Let us go to Bethlehem and see.”

And I returned glorifying and praising God.

The clock struck two as I got back to my cell.

Glory to God, my dear friend, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men! Amen!

LETTER XIX.

BETHLEHEM — THE MONASTERY — CHURCHES — DESCRIPTION OF THE SACRED GROTTO — ST. JEROME — ST. PAULA AND HER DAUGHTER EUSTOCHIUM — SANCTUARY OF THE NATIVITY — THE MANGER — THE MAGI — SOLEMN PROCESSION AT MIDNIGHT.

Bethlehem, January 9th, 1832.

Has it not sometimes happened to you, my friend, in treating of what is dear to you, that you have noted down your thoughts, your feelings; your remarks, that you have delineated places, persons, things; much less intent on arranging your ideas than on recording the impressions which you have received, and giving full scope to the effusions of your heart, without knowing when to finish? Such is the predicament in which I am in regard to Bethlehem: if you find reason to complain of my prolixity, I hope at least to interest you by the details.

Bethlehem is situated in the centre of Judea, about two leagues from Jerusalem. It was called in Hebrew

Beth-Lechem, a name given to it by Abraham, signifying house of bread. It was likewise called Ephrata, fruitful, after Caleb's wife. It was in allusion to the meaning of these two names that St. Paula, on reaching the place which bore them, exclaimed, full of joy: "I salute thee, Bethlehem, true house of bread, where was born the bread that came down from heaven! I salute thee, Ephrata, fertile land, where God came into the world!"

Bethlehem was likewise called City of David, because it was the birth-place of that prince, one of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, and the most illustrious of the kings of Israel. Lastly, it is sometimes designated in Scripture as Bethlehem of Judah, to distinguish it from another Bethlehem, situated in Galilee, dependent on the tribe of Zebulun, but in no way remarkable.

I will not conceal from you, my dear friend, that the surname of Ephrata, given to Bethlehem, as well as to its environs, has drawn a smile of pity from some *philosophic* travellers by whom it has been visited. They had before their eyes the real causes of the deplorable state in which they found a land, whose fertility is attested by the ancient historians most worthy of credit; but, misled by their prepossessions against Christianity, they have deemed it more *philosophic* to find fault with the soil itself for its present sterility, than with the oppressors who enchain it, who mutilate the arms necessary for its cultivation, and scarcely leave to the wretched, haggard, and emaciated inhabitants the scanty resources obtained by a toil with which they are more and more disgusted by the abject servitude to which they are re-

duced. The truth is, that, at the present day, in places cleared of briars and stones, the soil is extremely fertile. Figs and grapes abound there, and are delicious; every thing thrives there.

The first house in which I set foot on my arrival in Bethlehem, was, as I have told you, the monastery. It is a very extensive structure, the walls of which, built of enormous stones, exhibit, in their height and thickness, the appearance of a fortress. The door is so narrow, and so low, that you are forced to stoop and to squeeze yourself through. It has been made thus to render it more difficult for the Arabs to penetrate into the building, and to prevent several of them from entering at once—a precaution the more necessary in this country, as the people fall foul of the monks, especially when they are burdened by any new impost. They then see no other means of ridding themselves of it, than by throwing the weight of it on the unfortunate Fathers.

The monastery is divided into three parts, occupied separately by the Greeks, the Armenians, and the Catholics. The church is contiguous to the courtyard of the monastery.

On this spot, the first Christians had built a chapel, in which was enclosed the stable where our Saviour came into the world. They thronged thither from all parts, to adore, on that very spot, Him, who humbled himself so low, as to take the form of a little child, out of love to us. For the purpose of driving away the believers, and holding up their mysteries to the derision of the pagans, the emperor Adrian caused a statue to be erected there

to Adonis, and instituted in honour of him a particular worship, which subsisted till the reign of Constantine. Helena, the mother of that prince, during her sojourn in the Holy Land, added to the immense benefits by which she had already signalized her piety that of causing the infamous idol to be demolished, and the worship of it to be forbidden; and, through her means, arose, on the same spot, the church which at this day bears the name of Mary.

This church, though it has undergone great alterations and been frequently repaired, still bears unequivocal marks of its ancient and glorious origin. It is built in the form of a cross, and adorned with forty-eight marble columns of the Corinthian order. The Greeks and the Armenians have possessed themselves of it, as of many other places which belonged to the Latins; and their gold, profusely dispensed to the pacha of Damascus and the Porte, now secures to them the peaceful occupation.

The principal nave is separated from the choir and the transept by a thick wall. It belongs to the Greeks and the Armenians, who hold divine service there. The other parts are extremely neglected, no service being ever performed in them. The pavement is in such a wretched condition, that you cannot walk upon it without running the risk of dangerous falls. On the walls are to be seen some paintings, which appear to date back to the infancy of the art among us, and a few fragments of shattered mosaics.

Close to St. Mary's, there is another church, called St. Catherine's, which belongs to the Catholics. It is far too small for the number of the congregation. Its

principal ornament is an excellent organ, which I frequently go to play upon; and with the more pleasure, since the harmony of that instrument adds greatly, in my opinion, to the tenderness of the emotions that one feels, particularly at Bethlehem.

Through this church the Catholics now pass to the sacred grotto, instead of going the way which they formerly took. The continual cavils which the Greeks and the Armenians are incessantly raising against our good Fathers of the Holy Land, have given occasion to this change and to some others. I beg you to bear this in mind, my dear friend, that you may not be surprised if my account differs in some points from what you may have read in other travellers.

Oh! that I could now transfuse, in some measure, my soul into your's, with the thoughts, the affections, the feelings wherewith it is filled by the presence of all that I have the favour to behold! Collect yourself, prepare your heart; I am about to usher you into a grotto, where the profane man perceives, it is true, such objects only as he deems worthy of his contempt—a stable, a manger, an infant, poor, and almost deserving of pity! But for Christians—and Heaven has granted us the grace to be so—for Christians, that stable is a temple, that manger a sanctuary, that infant a Saviour, a God; a God, before whom the empires, which, to our petty vision, appear so vast, are scarcely what an atom of dust is to us; and those kings, and those nations, who so fiercely dispute a title belonging, by right, to Him alone, who are bent on being sovereigns, even without his grace—make a little noise to-day, gather a little of what

they term glory, merely to lose it to-morrow, and to die; and those men who call themselves learned, who cry aloud that their knowledge, their discoveries, their doctrines, their wisdom, their genius, are the only light capable of really enlightening the world, are nought but ignorance and darkness, understanding nothing of the things of heaven, and plunging, with their paltry science, like all the rest of mankind, into the night of the grave!

From St. Catherine you descend by a staircase, where two persons meeting would have difficulty to pass one another, and which is lighted by only two lamps, placed one before a picture of the Virgin Mary, the other before that of St. Francis.

At the bottom, on the right, a short passage leads to the altar of Eusebius, and thence to two others, which face each other, and are consecrated; the one to St. Paula, the other to St. Eustochium. Farther on is the principal part of the grotto of St. Jerome, which has been transformed into a chapel, that is likewise dedicated to him. Here it was that the illustrious recluse passed a great portion of his life; here it was that he fancied he heard the peals of that awful trump, which shall one day summon all mankind to judgment, incessantly ringing in his ears; here it was that with a stone he struck his body, bowed by the weight of years and austerities, and, with loud cries, besought mercy of the Lord; and here, too, it was that he produced those laborious works, which have justly earned him the title of Father of the Church.

The two pictures of St. Jerome, which adorn this grotto, are tolerable; but that of the little altar is

defective in the proportions ; the head is expressive, the body a great deal too small.

As for pictures, there are few that have struck me so much as that of St. Paula and her daughter Eustochium. It does not appear to me, it is true, to be by a very able pencil, but it has powerful effect. It represents those two saints in the same coffin. It is a touching idea of the painter's, as M. de Chateaubriand has aptly remarked, to have given a perfect resemblance to the mother and the daughter : youth, a white veil, and a crown of roses, are the only marks that distinguish one from the other. I should say, however, if I were permitted to have an opinion on such matters, that there is too much luxury, too much affectation, in the dress. They were descended, it is true, from Scipio ; they possessed immense wealth ; but their favourite virtues were Christian humility and simplicity, and it is moreover to be observed that Eustochium died superior of a monastery at Bethlehem.

Leaning against a piece of rock in this dark grotto, I looked stedfastly at this picture, lighted only by the flame of my torch, which I had set upon the altar ; and the silence, the solitude of the place, filled my soul with a religious awe. I had before my eyes the image of two persons of large fortune, of a name still renowned, and who, taught by faith, had renounced the honours, the joys, which the world could promise them, in the high rank in which they were placed, and had forsaken all for the one thing needful, for salvation. "Happy mother !" said I, to myself, "to have comprehended, and to have made her daughter comprehend, how short-lived

are pleasures, since life itself is of such brief duration ! Happy daughter, to have listened to the lessons, to have followed the example, of so worthy a mother ! Happy, too, to have chosen for a spouse Him whose tenderness, like his life, is never-ending, and with whom one is assured of happiness as long as eternity !” And then, my thoughts soaring from these subterranean vaults, and from the contemplation of their tomb, to heaven, I saw them bearing immortal palms, the prize of their courage and perseverance, and crowned with glory.

Do not infer, my dear friend, from this language, that I would have all young Christian females retire from the world and bury themselves alive in solitude. Society needs for its happiness, still more than for the honour and the glory of religion, wives, mothers, like St. Paula, as well as virgins consecrated to God, like St. Eustochium. But, I confess to you, that, at the foot of that coffin of the two saints, I could not suppress the wish that certain mothers, whom the world seduces with its profane assemblies, its dances, its promenades, its concerts, its festivities ; who expose to looks, rarely chaste, the youth, the graces of their daughters, bedizened and crowned with flowers ; I could not, I say, suppress the wish that such mothers had in their house a copy of this picture to assist them to comprehend, and to teach their children to comprehend, that beauty fades as quickly as the flower whose lustre it possesses ; that friendships cease, that reputation is frail as glass, that riches pass away, that sports, and smiles, and pleasures, are mingled with sorrows, often very poignant, and always end in regrets ; that, in short, amidst the world,

as well as aloof from the world, there is nothing solid and durable but virtue.

To go to the sacred grotto, we must turn back from the point where we now are. You pass the altar, beneath which is the sepulchre of the Holy Innocents, which I have already mentioned. This is the spot where, according to tradition, were interred the children of Bethlehem, whom Herod doomed to die.

“Then Herod,” says the Evangelists, “seeing that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

“Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremie the prophet, saying :

“In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not.”

On ascending a few steps, you come to a door which leads to the subterraneous chapel of the holy grotto. It is thirty-eight feet long, eleven wide, and nine high ; two flights of fifteen steps each, constructed on the sides, lead one to the church of the Greeks, the other to that of the Armenians. The rocks and the pavement are covered with a costly marble given by St. Helena. Thirty-two lamps burn without interruption in this sacred place, to which the light of day never penetrates. At the farther end, towards the east, is the spot where the Virgin brought forth the Saviour of the world. This

spot, lighted by sixteen lamps, is marked by a slab of white marble, fixed in the pavement, and lined with jasper, in the centre of which is a silver sun, surrounded with this inscription :—

HIC DE VIRGINE MARIA
JESUS CHRISTUS NATUS EST.

Over it is a marble table, serving for an altar, and supported by two pillars. Under this altar, and between the two pillars, you stoop to kiss the sacred spot designated by the inscription.

A little lower down, towards the south, is the manger.

“ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

“ To be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

“ And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that they should be delivered.

“ And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Facing the manger, and three paces from it, is the spot where Mary was sitting with the infant Jesus in her arms, when the wise men came to worship him, and to present their gifts to him.

“ Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod, the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

“ Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?

for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him

“And lo ! the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”

The manger is raised about a foot above the level of the grotto, and lined with white marble. At the back, a tolerably good painting, in a silver frame, represents the adoration of the shepherds. It covers the bare rock. It is removed on Christmas-day, and the rock is left exposed for some time to the view and the veneration of the pious. On this occasion it is cleaned by the Father guardian, who reverently collects the little bits that drop off. I shall bring with me some of them, for which I am indebted to his kindness.

The Christian princes have made it a duty to send presents for the embellishment of the manger. It is always hung with magnificent draperies ; those for this week are of white silk, sprinkled with roses, and embroidered with gold. On the spot where the wise men worshipped Jesus is an altar, with a fine painting representing the Adoration, and above it a large star.

The sanctuary of the Nativity belongs to the Greeks ; the manger and the place of the adoration of the wise men, to the Catholics.

I never enter this august grotto but with a taper in my hand, as when I visited Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre. When, kneeling before the spot where our Lord was born, I cast my eyes on these words: *HIC DE VIRGINE MARIA JESUS CHRISTUS NATUS EST.*—"Here Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary"—there arises within me a feeling totally distinct and different from that produced by other acts of Christian piety. To the believer the word *Here* has a charm, an attraction, a captivation, which cannot be either felt or comprehended but on the spot. The soul, the heart, all the faculties, are spell-bound by that word; you repeat it a thousand times, and, when you have repeated it for the thousandth time, you pronounce it again: it is incessantly on the burning lips of gratitude and love.

There is in fact no place in the world where the heart can be more deliciously moved than in this grotto at Bethlehem. When, calling to mind the time, the season of the year, when the poor infant Jesus was born, I add, while communing with myself: "*HERE* is the spot;" methinks I hear him weeping with cold and want; methinks I see Mary, his fond mother, bestowing upon him all the cares of the most ingenious tenderness; Joseph, on hearing the cry of his adopted son, hastening to take him from the arms of his mother, to clasp him in his own, and to warm him on his bosom: and these ideas fill my soul with ineffable sentiments, which my pen would strive in vain to describe. I pray, I sigh; I lift towards heaven my eyes swimming in tears; I murmur the sacred name of Jesus, and the names of Mary and Joseph; and I bless the thrice gracious God for having,

in his mercy, given me his son for my Saviour; I bless him, too, for having given me a soul that is touched, softened, penetrated, by such incomprehensible bounty.

You know, my dear friend, with what pomp, with what joy, the festival of Christmas and the midnight mass are celebrated throughout the whole Catholic world: you have had occasion, like me, to remark the beauty of the decorations which adorn our temples at the time of this great solemnity, and the immense concourse of the faithful, and their pious solicitude to go and worship the infant Jesus, and that unanimous concert of praise and thanksgiving for the happy advent of the divine Messiah, and those songs and hymns in which the general joy bursts forth. Conceive then what must be such a festival, such a service, held at midnight at Bethlehem, on the very spot where Jesus deigned to be born. I will not repeat here what you may have seen elsewhere. I will not stop to describe the holy magnificence displayed at this solemnity; I will say nothing either of the rich tapestries with which the marbles are covered, or of the ravishing strains of a music in perfect harmony with the sublimity and the soothing nature of the mystery, or of the countless tapers which burn not only upon the altar, but in the whole of the interior, or of the pomp that surrounds the reverend Father warden in the exercise of his functions, or of the ornaments sparkling with gold which attest the munificence of the Catholic princes of other days, and are worn by the numerous priests who assist in the service—but I will say a few words to you concerning one august and impressive ceremony which cannot be performed any where but here: that is a

solemn procession to the manger, with which the service commences.

At midnight, at that hour of salvation, when, in all the Catholic churches in the world, the infant Jesus receives the homage of all faithful Christians, the reverend Father warden opens the procession, and advances with slow step, his head bowed, and reverentially carrying in his arms the infant Jesus. On reaching the very spot of the nativity, the deacon, with deep devotion, chants the gospel. When he comes to the words—"and wrapped him in swaddling clothes"—he receives the infant from the hands of the Father warden, wraps him in swaddling clothes, lays him in the manger, falls on his knees, and worships At that moment, my friend, there flashes into the soul something supernatural, I may venture to call it, judging from what I have witnessed, from what I have myself felt. Piety ceases to find a voice to express its gratitude, its love; it speaks only in the melting language of the eyes, in sighs, and in tears.

Farewell, my dear friend; I lay down the pen, hoping that my letter may impart to you some little portion of my happiness at Bethlehem: you would be, at least for a moment, in a sort of paradise. Once more, farewell.

LETTER XX.

INHABITANTS OF BETHLEHEM—WOMEN—HOUSES—COSTUMES—MARRIAGES—MANNERS—HISTORY OF A WIDOW—FUNERALS—BAWLING—ANECDOTE ON THAT SUBJECT.

Bethlehem, January 15, 1832.

My last letter, my dear friend, related to the matters most interesting to my heart, and no doubt to your's.

Alas ! the more happy I find myself in the seclusion of the monastery, with the good Fathers—in the sacred grotto—in the subterraneous chapels—at the foot of the numerous altars raised upon a spot of prodigies and miracles—so much the more, when outside of it, am I filled with melancholy and compassion at the sight of the deplorable state in which the birth-place of my Saviour, that city which my faith renders so precious and so dear to me, is at this day.

Bethlehem was, from the very earliest times, a considerable town. Rehoboam, the fourth king of Jerusalem, enlarged and embellished it by the erection of important buildings there. Now-a-days it retains not even a shadow of its past splendour and beauty. It is but a confused assemblage of houses, or rather ruins, the abodes of indigence and servitude. These houses are square, like those at Jaffa and Rama. The staircase is outside, and the roof is terraced.

The Bethlehemites are descended from the tribe of Judah. The population is composed of eighteen hundred Catholics, the like number of Greeks, perhaps fifty Armenians, and about one hundred and forty Turks. The number is accurate : I had it from the Catholic priests, and I wish more particularly to call your attention to it, because most travellers have fallen into strange mistakes on this point : some of them have even limited the Christian population to one hundred souls.

Under any other government the inhabitants of Bethlehem would be in easy, and even in affluent, circumstances : but, as it is, they are every moment crushed by fresh impositions. I have already told you by what

means they contrive to escape utter ruin, and, at the same time, to satisfy their oppressors. The good Fathers are sometimes forced to avoid by flight the ill-usage to which they are then liable ; they had found themselves under this cruel necessity three or four weeks before my arrival. I have been told that a Father warden, a Portuguese, who had been seized by the Turks and threatened with death, made no other reply to their furious speeches than these words: " You have it in your power to hang me, if such is your pleasure ; but, as for money, none will you have, because we have none." He held the same language, even with the rope about his neck. This firmness saved him, and gained him his liberty.

The conviction of these unfortunate creatures, that the principal fruit of their toils would go to the tyrants who oppress them, completely disgusts them with labour, and keeps them in an idleness, for which they only seek pretexts, and these never fail them. Among these pretexts must be reckoned the great number of festivals which they are in the habit of keeping. Their slothful devotion is not content with the repose of those days during which the church forbids all servile work ; they *keep holy* in the same manner a multitude of others, and all the remonstrances of the Holy See on this head have been absolutely useless. I do not recollect that any sight ever filled me with more horror and disgust than that of these people, scantily covered with scattered rags, parading their indolence in a public place, or seated close to some ruinous building, employed in ridding themselves of the vermin which eat them up, and

imagining that they are doing a thing well pleasing to God in not touching tools or implements, by means of which they might, without the violation of any law, secure for themselves a less miserable existence.

The children follow in every respect the example of their parents: nowhere have I seen the rising generation so idle. At all hours, with the exception of those when they are at school, and everywhere, you meet with troops of them romping, playing, fighting, giving way to all the turbulence of their age. The Fathers of the Holy Land, whose alms are altogether immense, not only pay masters to teach them, but feed them besides—well aware that the only reward which they have to expect for this benefit, sooner or later, is ingratitude, provoked by excessive distress.

The principal, if not the only, occupation of the people of these parts consists in the fabrication of chaplets, crucifixes, and other objects of religious reverence, which are purchased by the pilgrims. These things were formerly cheap; but their price has risen considerably, owing to the greatly increased number of Greeks and Armenians who now go on pilgrimage to the holy places; and also since the Turks have taken a fancy to carry a sort of chaplet, which seems to have become an essential complement of their costume, and of which they make a sort of toy that they play with even in the streets.

The real wealth of the Bethlehemite, and upon the whole of every Arab of these parts, consists in his wife: she is his treasure, his strength, his support, and, unfortunately, he knows not her value; he makes her his beast of burden. Nowhere have I seen women work so

hard as at Bethlehem ; nay, I could not have believed that so weak and so delicate a creature was capable of such fatigue, had I not witnessed it myself. Within doors she has every thing to do.

As the reservoirs and the canals which supply Bethlehem, as well as Jerusalem, with water, are in ruins and dry eleven months in the year, the women are obliged to go a league to fetch what they want for household use, and to bring it back themselves in skins. Add to this, the toil of climbing steep hills under their burden, and then say, my dear friend, if it be possible to suppress a painful feeling, especially when you consider that this task is to be performed three or four times a week.

A few days since, I was taking a walk outside the town with the *curé*. About three quarters of a mile from it, we met with a young girl returning with her provision. She had set down her skin upon a fragment of rock, and was standing beside it, out of breath, and wiping the perspiration from her face. Curious to know the weight of the skin, I begged her to put it on my shoulders ; my request astonished her not a little ; she nevertheless complied very cheerfully. It was as much as I could do to take a few steps under the burden. "Poor thing !" said I, as I threw it down, looking at the *curé*, "how old is she ? not more than sixteen, I dare say."—"Sixteen !" said he ; "she is not thirteen ;" and, addressing her in Arabic, he asked : "How old are you, my girl ?"—"Twelve, sir." I took from my pocket some pieces of money, which I handed to her, and which she accepted with a lively demonstration of joy.

But to go so far for water is not the only task of the poor Bethlehemites. The town is destitute of wood, nor is any to be found nearer than some leagues: it is the women who are obliged to provide this also. But what wrings one's heart, and, I must confess, makes my blood boil, is to see these wretched, worn-down, emaciated creatures, having misery stamped on their faces, sinking beneath their loads, passing in sight of their husbands, listlessly seated in the public square, smoking or chatting by way of pastime, while not a thought ever enters the head of any of these heartless husbands to relieve his partner of her burden, and to carry for her, at least from that spot to his home, what she has had to bring whole leagues.

Is this all? No, my friend. At night, with this wood, which has cost such toil, she is obliged to heat the water brought from such a distance; she has to wash the feet of that man, then to cook his supper, then to wait upon him standing — upon him and his eldest son — without taking the least share in the meal, and to wait till they have done, before she can step aside to eat by herself what they have left The pen drops from my fingers. Is it possible that a sex so worthy of all the cares, of all the attentions, of all the affection, of man, can be thus treated by man? is it possible that she can be thus treated by man, who carries him in her bosom, who brings him forth with pain, who suckles him with her milk, who warms him on her heart, who rocks him upon her knees, who guides his first steps, who strives by education to transfuse into him all that is gentle and kind, who delights to throw a charm over his life, who

shares his sorrows, who best knows how to soothe his woes, to comfort him, to nurse him in illness and infirmity, to lighten and sometimes to embellish his old age, and to perform for him, until his last moment, services of which any other courage, any other devotedness, any other love, would be incapable? and that at Bethlehem!

Several of these men are occasionally brought to the monastery by business which they have to transact with the monks. Some of them understand Italian. I have talked to them. I shall not repeat to you what too just an indignation prompted me to say.

The consequence of scarcity of water, in a country where rain is not frequent, is extreme filthiness, which renders poverty more hideous: the people rarely wash themselves any more than the linen and the rags which constitute their garments: every thing about them is disgusting. The women, in general remarkable for regularity of features, are the first victims of this miserable condition: nastiness fades and withers such charms as they do possess.

With the exception of one or two houses, this poverty, this excessive filthiness, are to be found every where. I will tell you, without the least exaggeration, what I have myself seen.

I went one day to visit one of the most respectable families in the town. Through a passage, disgustingly dirty, I came to a vaulted room without windows: it received no light but by the doorway, the only aperture at which the smoke of the hearth and the stove could escape; the walls were blackened by it. At the entrance I found two brothers busily employed in making little

articles of piety out of mother-of-pearl; farther on, the wife of one of them was suckling an infant, and near her was her husband's mother, suckling one also; she was surrounded by three other young children. Two cradles were the whole of the furniture. A short conversation ensued with one of the brothers. "Where do you sleep, my friend?" — "In this room with my wife." — "And your father and mother?" — "Here, too." — "And your little brothers?" — "They are always with us." — "But I see no bed." — "That blanket which hangs yonder is mine, that belongs to my father and mother; at night, we spread them on the floor, and sleep on them." — "But all these fowls — where do they sleep?" — "In this little corner." The fowls had, in fact, a lodging in the same apartment.

Such a domestic establishment, no doubt, surprises you, my dear friend. Your astonishment will cease when you know that the means by which, as I have told you, the Bethlehemites contrive to satisfy the rapacity of the pachas are not always successful, that frequently they fail. At such times, fathers, mothers, wives, children, the aged, must all flee, and thus each has the less difficulty to carry with him in his flight the little that he possesses.

May we venture to hope that, under the Egyptian government, an end will be put to this state of things? I dare not believe so. To me there seems every reason to apprehend that, under a form less cruel in appearance, the old oppression will continue without abatement: the shirt will not be stripped from the back; but it will be taken away all the same.

The dress of the Bethlehemites, if we may believe the general opinion, is as nearly as possible what it was in the time of our Lord. That of the women, both in the town and in the environs, particularly struck me. They are dressed in precisely the same manner as the Virgin Mary in the pictures which represent her : not only the fashion of the garments, but the very colours, are the same : a blue gown and red cloak, or a red gown and blue cloak, and a white veil over all. The first time that I chanced to see, at a distance, a woman of Bethlehem, carrying a little child in her arms, I could not help starting ; methought I beheld Mary and the infant Jesus coming towards me.

On another occasion, my emotion was not less lively : I perceived an old man, with white hair, and white beard, driving an ass along the hill on which Bethlehem is situated ; he was followed by a young female, dressed in blue and red, and covered with a white veil. I was at Bethlehem ; imagination carried me back to the time of Augustus Cæsar. In a moment, it transformed those two persons into Joseph and Mary, coming, in obedience to the orders of the prince, to be taxed.

The dress of the country-people also awakens in the mind touching reflections : it is, I am assured, exactly the same as that of the shepherds at the time of our Saviour's birth, and dates back upwards of two thousand years. It is a sort of smock-frock or tunic, drawn tight round the waist by a leathern thong, and a cloak over that. No shoes : people in general go barefoot.

A singular practice prevails here relative to marriages. Parents are accustomed to promise their children, when

they are but two years old, one year old, or even younger.

A Catholic Arab said to me, a few days since, rubbing his hands for joy: "I have just promised my daughter; it is an excellent match for her." "How old is she?" "A fortnight." "And her intended?" "Four years." "I have doubly to congratulate you; never in my life do I recollect to have heard of a more innocent couple."

The father of the male child buys the girl; he bargains about the price, and pays down part of it immediately, by way of earnest. In our European countries, parents could not settle their daughters respectably in life, unless they were to give them a portion: here, on the contrary, as you see, the father is paid for his daughter, so that the more children of the female sex he has, the richer he is. How often have I not already heard the expression: "My wife cost me so much 'tis a high price." In conversing with the workmen who made chaplets and other things for me, I have frequently asked this question: "How much did your wife cost you?" and those to whom I addressed it answered it immediately and with the greatest sincerity. "I paid eight hundred piastres for mine," said one of them, one day. "And what was the price of your mother?" I proceeded. "Four hundred piastres."—"That is very low in comparison."—"But, Father, the piastre was worth more than it is now."

I ought not, however, to omit to say that part of the money is expended by those who receive it, in purchasing clothes for the affianced damsel.

Notwithstanding this traffic, there is not a country in

the world where the manners are more pure than at Bethlehem and at Jerusalem. The conduct of the females, married and single, is so irreproachable, that no instance is known of any of those crimes, which licentiousness and debauchery, favoured by irreligion, have rendered too frequent among us, being discovered and proved. The most terrible death is always the punishment of the slightest violation of chastity. Woe even to those over whom any serious suspicion hovers! On this point the Bethlehemites are inflexible: they must have blood to wipe away disgrace.

I intended at first to leave buried in silence the following story, of which I cannot think without shuddering, and which my hand still hesitates to record; but it ought, I think, to be introduced into a picture of Palestine.

Nine or ten years ago, a young Turk was seen in one of the neighbouring grottoes. Unluckily, the young widow of a Catholic Bethlehemite, celebrated for her beauty, was there also. Those who had found them having spread the tidings through the town, the Turk fled; the young woman, alarmed, had time to seek refuge in the convent of the Holy Land. Having sought her in vain where she no longer was, the Bethlehemites at length discovered her retreat. They immediately repaired tumultuously to the monastery. They found the door locked; but this too feeble barrier fell before their fury. The crowd rushed in, and there was the victim, face to face with those who were bent on sacrificing her. In vain the good monks formed a rampart for her with their bodies; in vain they extended

to the infuriated assailants their supplicating hands ; in vain they besought, they conjured them, in the name of the God of mercy, who was born but a few paces off, to save sinners, not to spill the blood of an unfortunate fellow-creature, whose guilt was not proved ; in vain some of them threw themselves at their feet and grasped their knees, while others strove to repel force by force : they were vanquished in this combat of charity, and the young widow, with dishevelled hair, stricken with horror, beside herself, was dragged by the murderous troop to the public place.

Here commenced a new scene, the very idea of which makes me shudder with horror, and which my hand cannot describe without trembling. Surrounded by her executioners, the hapless widow cried aloud for mercy : she wished to say a few words to clear herself from suspicion Her brothers, her father, were there ; she perceived them, called them ; but that father, those brothers, showed themselves most intent upon her destruction “ Father ! father ! for God’s sake, recollect that to you I owe my existence ! My brothers, can you forget that we are sprung from the same mother ? ” Useless appeal ! she sank swooning ; her eyes closed ; she appeared lifeless. All at once they opened once more, to see her brothers following the terrible example of paternal wrath. All of them then steeped their hands in her blood, and the family deemed that it has thus washed away the stain which would have covered it for ever. The palpitating corpse of the murdered woman was torn in pieces by the populace.

Funerals never take place at Bethlehem without cer-

tain absurd practices which are derived from paganism. On the day of interment, the women assemble to weep, to dance, to leap, to shriek all at once, on the grave of the deceased. On certain days of the month in which the death happened, they return to the cemetery, and there repeat their contortions, their screams, and their tears. To see them, you would take them for witches. One alone speaks for the space of two minutes, while the others listen in silence. When she stops, at a certain sign the gesticulations and shrieks are renewed, and continued till weariness obliges them to desist. I have sometimes requested the *curés*, who are perfect masters of the Arabic, to explain to me what they say : but they have assured me that it is a language of their own, and that it is not understood even by their husbands. They added that all their preaching, all their remonstrances, have failed to put an end to this ridiculous and detestable custom.

Like almost all the Arabs, the Bethlehemites have a loud and most disagreeable tone of voice : you would suppose that they were always quarreling or in a passion. You hear two persons talking, as it were, both at once, and shouting with all their might ; you ask your interpreter what is the matter, and whether they are going to fight. One of them has asked : "What o'clock is it?" and the other replied : "I cannot tell." These cries are uttered with such incredible volubility and in so shrill a tone as almost to split one's ears. It is at church that this practice is most annoying, especially when the congregation is numerous. All of them then speak at once, as though they were in the public street.

To no purpose the Father warden and the *curé* may preach and exert themselves; their efforts are vain: if by chance they obtain one day some degree of silence, you may predict with certainty that the noise will begin again on the next. The pilgrim cannot get used to this scandal.

Relative to the behaviour of the Arabs in church, a singular circumstance happened on the festival of St. Thomas of Canterbury; it passed in the presence of five hundred witnesses, and yet you would perhaps scarcely believe it, did you not know my veracity.

On the preceding day, the feast of the Holy Innocents, the reverend Father warden of the Holy Land had confirmed the young boys of Bethlehem, who were very numerous. The same ceremony for the females was fixed for the following day, and there had not been one of them at church, but a great concourse of men attended. They made a frightful noise; the uproar never was greater.

Next day, the women and the girls came in their turn for confirmation. The Father warden had directed that they should be exclusively admitted. No heed was paid to this order. The multitude, composed of Catholics, Greeks, and Turks, was much greater than on the preceding day, and the tumult raised was in the like proportion. The *curé* addressed them, but in vain. The reverend Father, to show his displeasure, suspended the ceremony, and thus obtained a momentary silence; but the noise presently began again: again the Father paused, declaring that it was impossible for him to proceed. I was in the gallery and upon thorns. At length I rose,

and cried with all my might in Arabic, *Oskot!* Silence! All eyes instantly turned about, and perceiving a man of lofty stature, clad completely in white, with a long bushy beard, they were all struck mute with surprise. Darting down among them, I directed the doors to be opened, and ordered them to quit the church forthwith. Never did I see any thing like the scene that ensued. All rushed towards the door as if panic-struck, each striving to get out first. Possessing considerable strength, I pushed forward the hindmost, who seemed to lag; the church was cleared and the ceremony was finished in quiet.

This victory cost me but the trouble of keeping my arm uplifted for a few moments, and the courage to pronounce a few words with energy. It was curious to see all those turbans, those black beards, those hideous faces, those sabres, those daggers, fleeing before a pilgrim and one or two monks who had come to his assistance. I stationed myself at the door, and declared that not a creature should be readmitted. I have since remarked much more order and decency, especially on New-year's eve and day. This state of things is kept up even at low mass, when I do not suffer the least noise. All are silent the moment they see me.

LETTER XXI.

RESERVOIRS OF DAVID—POOLS OF SOLOMON—GROTTO OF MILK—VILLAGE OF THE SHEPHERDS—WELL OF THE VIRGIN MARY—PLACE WHERE THE SHEPHERDS HEARD THE VOICES OF THE ANGELS—TEKOAH—LABYRINTH—HILL OF THE FRENCH.

Bethlehem, January 21st, 1832.

I employ my days, my dear friend, in visiting the most remarkable places in the environs. When the

excursions are long, I mount my horse very early, accompanied by several monks and an escort of Arabs of Bethlehem, armed — a needful precaution against the perils to which you are exposed under the present circumstances of Palestine, especially in the gorges of the mountains bordering the Dead Sea, where you have always reason to apprehend that you may fall in with the Bedouins.

The reservoirs of David, formerly contiguous to the gates of the town, are now a thousand paces distant from it, owing to the destruction of its ancient edifices, and the successive decrease of the population. They were lined at bottom with lead. One of them bears more especially the name of the prophet-king.

These reservoirs remind you at once of the victory gained by that prince over the Philistines in the plain of Raphaim, which I have already told you that I saw on my right coming from Jerusalem, and his glorious refusal, though parched with thirst, to drink of the water which three brave men of his army had, at the risk of their lives, fetched for him through the midst of the enemy. “God forbid,” said he, “that I should do this thing: it would seem to me as though I drank the blood of those valiant men” — remarkable words, which it is impossible not to admire, when one knows the heat of the climate, and the excessive thirst which it causes, especially after the fatigues of a long combat.

As I have just made mention of water, I will tell you, by the way, that the water of the reservoir of the monastery at Bethlehem is delicious. When poured out, you would take it for the purest crystal; every drop is

like a diamond. That of the reservoir at Jerusalem is superior even to that. Never have I seen or drunk any so limpid. Would you believe that at table I have frequently suspended my repast, to enjoy the pleasure of looking at it, so extraordinary does its beauty appear to me?

About a league from Bethlehem are the ponds of Solomon, "the pools of water," which that prince enumerates among the great works which he wrought to make himself happy, and which, in the sequel, he could not look at without suffering this confession to escape from his heart—this confession, which all those who, in seeking happiness, seek it elsewhere than of God, will make in all ages, if they are sincere :

"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do, and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

These ponds have been excavated in the bosom of hills of difficult access. There are three situated one above another, so that the superabundance of the highest basin runs into that which is immediately below it. They supply Jerusalem and Bethlehem with water. Unfortunately, the canals are ruined in many places, and hence the necessity, so arduous for the women of Bethlehem, to fetch it from a great distance. It would be easy to repair the mischief at a small expense. But what cares the pacha, who comes to his pachalik merely to oppress the inhabitant, to wrest from him his last farthing—what cares such a man, I say, whether every thing goes to ruin or not? He leaves repairs for his

successor, and his successor for the governor who shall come after him ; meanwhile monuments fall from age, buildings crumble to dust, the oppressed emigrate, or stay but to suffer ; every thing languishes, every thing decays, every thing perishes.

These extensive ponds evidently bear the stamp of the most remote antiquity ; and the most obstinate incredulity could not dispute with Solomon the glory of having constructed them. They are partly hewn out of the rock, and must have cost immense labour. You can scarcely believe your eyes when you reflect that they have been formed in the flanks of the rock, without the aid of gunpowder, which was then unknown.

The last of these reservoirs is but half as capacious as the first ; I know not its precise dimensions, or those of the two others : I had not time to measure them. Not far off, my attention was directed to a little spring, which, I was assured, supplies all the water in those ponds. This assertion appeared to me ridiculous : without abundant rains it is not possible that they should ever be full.

Two hundred paces from Bethlehem, in another direction, is a grotto of the same kind as that of the Nativity, but not so large, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. It is called the Grotto of Milk. Tradition relates that, before the flight into Egypt, Mary concealed herself there for some time. Here is seen an altar cut out of the rock, where mass is sometimes held, and where also the litanies are chanted.

The devotion for this place is great ; the motive for it is the virtue universally attributed to the stones of the

grotto. As these stones are very soft, it is easy to chip off bits, which are reduced to powder, and in that form administered to suckling women whose milk is scanty. Not only the Greeks, the Armenians, the Russians, and in general all the nations that have pilgrims at Jerusalem, attach great confidence to this powder, but even the Turks and the Arabs, who carry it to Turkey, and into the very heart of Africa.

I shall make no remark on the virtue of these stones, and on its causes. I merely affirm, as an ascertained fact, that a great number of persons obtain from it the effect which they anticipate.

Half a league from this grotto, eastward, beyond a hill, which you descend by a very rapid declivity, is the Village of the Shepherds. This is the spot where dwelt the shepherds to whom the angels appeared for the purpose of proclaiming to them the birth of the Saviour. It may be perceived very distinctly from the terrace of the monastery, and I always contemplate it with pleasure. The history of which it reminds you is one of those which, from my earliest years, made the most agreeable impression upon my memory, and I never knew a Christian child for whom it had not the same charms. At that age, much more than when the passions have introduced a proud wisdom into the soul, one finds, one feels in it something truly heavenly, and, thanks to the innocence and the purity of the heart, one speedily and cheerfully ranges one's self, if I may be allowed the expression, on the side of Him, who, in admitting well-meaning men to the presence of his divine Son, has given to shepherds the precedence before kings.

This village is inhabited half by Catholics, half by Greeks. It is built like all those in these parts. Each house is a heap of stones piled up without order, and exhibiting nearly the appearance of irregular walls, in which are two holes, called, one the door, the other the window. We were shown a well, whither, according to tradition, the Virgin came to wash the clothes of the infant Jesus, while she was secreted in the Grotto of Milk.

The very spot where the shepherds heard the voices of the angels is now inclosed with walls. It is planted with fifty or sixty olive trees. The care of it is committed to a Greek priest, whom I found destitute of every thing, and in a state of such abject poverty, that he had scarcely rags to cover his skin, scorched by the sun. This unfortunate creature asked me for some tobacco; as I had none, I made amends by giving him a few pieces of money, which he received with profound gratitude. I bought of him permission to cut an olive branch thick enough to make me a walking-stick.

In the centre of the inclosure is a grotto, in which St. Helena caused a chapel to be built and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. On entering, I fell upon my knees, and, according to my custom of reading on the very spot, in that attitude, and uncovered, the passages relating to it, I read, with an extraordinary feeling of happiness, that passage of the Gospel of St. Luke, beginning with these words :

“ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.”

The chapel and the inclosure of the Shepherds belonged formerly to the Latins; I need not tell you that they have been dispossessed of them.

As I had yesterday a long excursion before me, I mounted my horse before it was light: I intended to visit the ancient Tekoa, the birth-place of the prophet Amos; next, the Labyrinth, a name given to a series of caverns, the number of which is so considerable that it is still unknown; and, lastly, the hill of the French, so called ever since the last crusade, because, after the taking of Jerusalem by the Saracens, four hundred French retired thither, and, having built a very strong castle, the ruins of which may be seen to this day, they held out there for a long time.

As usual, I had with me several monks and an escort. After a ride of two hours along a stony road, and after crossing several hills of difficult access, you arrive at Tekoa. It is now but a heap of stones, covering a space of half a league. In surveying these ruins, I perceived a pillar of red marble and a basin also of marble, surmounted by a cross. This was no doubt the baptistery of a church, which, I was assured, had been built on this spot by St. Helena, though I could not discover any other vestiges of it.

On leaving Tekoa to proceed to the Labyrinth, our Bethlehemites took it into their heads to discharge their pieces, the report of which, repeated by the echoes of the hills, seemed to amuse them much. Having no more than ten armed men in my escort, I was far from approving this pastime, which would naturally apprize the Arabs of the presence of strangers in the parts bordering

upon the Dead Sea. I reprimanded them, and the more severely, because, in case of attack, I had some reason not to rely too strongly on their courage. Besides, who could warrant that these shots were not a preconcerted signal? An Arab remains for ever an Arab.

An hour had not elapsed, when our dragoman hurried up to us, pale and in great alarm. "There are the Bedouins!" he exclaimed; "there they are!" Presently, we actually perceived a score of dark figures following us, but yet without coming too near. I collected my people, ordered them to keep together, and, above all, to advance slowly, to show that we were not afraid; and, thus pursuing our route among frightful precipices, we reached the caverns. The Bedouins had retired.

The entrance to these caverns is very dangerous and almost inaccessible: you cannot approach them but over rocks, which appear as if suspended over abysses, and by-paths so narrow that a single false step might cost you your life. No recollection, sacred or profane, is attached to these frightful caverns; and, besides, I have seen so many in the course of my travels, that I did not much care to expose myself to the risk of exploring the interior of these. However, either from shame, or a hankering of curiosity, I suffered myself to be persuaded: and there was I, acting the youngster, climbing, clambering, leaping, till at length I found myself in the first cavern.

Notwithstanding the prodigious height of the vaults, the heat here was suffocating; the farther we advanced, the thicker the air became; moreover, our torches were nearly burned out, and we were threatened with pro-

found darkness. Having seen what is most remarkable, I thought it prudent to give the order for our return. But when, on emerging from the vast cave, I saw at my feet those frightful precipices — when I surveyed the scarped rocks opposite to me, on one of which I should have to spring, I was for a moment motionless with stupor, and seriously reproached myself for my indiscretion. Fortunately, my guardian angel was at hand : assisted by a Spanish lay-brother, not less courageous than kind, I took the leap, and arrived, without accident, but not without great labour, at the place where we had left our horses.

Our caravan had increased by the way : here and there we had been joined by parties of Bethlehemites, so that we now amounted to nearly forty persons. We had taken care to provide ourselves with refreshments. Seated on the rocks, we took a light repast, that we might continue our excursion with the more vigour. Nothing could be more picturesque than the scene presented by this collation ; I would have given any thing to take a sketch of it, but I had neither paper nor pencil. We were on the slope of an abyss, surrounded by rocks whose tops seemed to touch the sky. Confined within a very narrow space, we prudently held our horses by the bridle. Whenever I put a morsel of bread into my mouth, my mare neighed and pawed the ground till I had shared it with her. At the conclusion of the repast, at a moment when my thoughts were wholly engrossed by the singularity of the sight presented by the assemblage of our associates amidst the dangers that surrounded us, what was my surprise to see my drago-

man bringing me some excellent coffee, in a very handsome cup. By a refinement of attention, he had prepared it so secretly that I had not perceived either fire or smoke. Coffee is here an article of the first necessity, and this I already knew from my own experience; but could I ever have supposed that I should drink it in such a place? The collation over, we resumed our march.

Meanwhile, the Bedouins, whom we believed to be at a great distance, had not yet been so near to us as now. They were concealed behind rocks: we perceived now and then the point of a lance, or a turban popping out and immediately drawn back again. An attack on their part appeared to me inevitable; I dreaded it the more, since, being obliged to go one by one, leading our horses by the bridle, we had but few means of defence. They probably discovered that they should have to do not with Bethlehmites alone, but also with Europeans; and, judging their strength inadequate, they suffered us to pass unmolested.

After a march of two hours, we arrived at the Hill of the French. The approach to this hill is extremely toilsome: no trace of a road, nothing but stones and rocks. When half-way up, my companions made me remark that, from this point, the hill was a work of art, and had been raised by the hand of man. Dr. Clarke, a celebrated English traveller, asserts that it resembles Vesuvius, and that it has a crater, which, according to his account, is distinctly visible. It is true that he saw it only from a distance. We have, nevertheless, a right to be surprised at such a mistake in a man of his merit.

From the top, the view is magnificent, enchanting.

The Dead Sea, though several leagues distant, appears to lie at your feet. Behind rise the mountains of Arabia Petræa, that vast grave of an ungrateful people ; and Nebo, which God commanded the leader of the Hebrews to ascend, and whence he showed him the whole country on either side of the Jordan, saying : “ Behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession . . . thou shalt see the land before thee, but thou shalt not go thither.” You know why. On the right are discerned the mountains of Hebron, where is still shown the tomb of the patriarch of Chaldea, the father of the faithful, those of Engadi, the heights of Bethulia, &c.

We got back very late, wet with a heavy shower, which overtook us by the way.

Farewell, my dear friend ; according to all appearance, my next letter will be dated from Jerusalem. I am also bidding farewell to Bethlehem ; but I hope, by the blessing of God, not for the last time.

Once more, adieu !

LETTER XXII.

DEARTH — PALESTINE — JERUSALEM — SIEGE BY TITUS — CONVERSION
OF CONSTANTINE — JULIAN, THE APOSTATE — THE CALIPH OMAR I. —
CRUSADES — TAKING OF JERUSALEM — CARNAGE — SALADIN.

Jerusalem, January 30th, 1832.

Here I am again at Jerusalem, my dear friend, after an absence of three weeks. It was not without keen regret, and without promising myself to repeat my visit, that I left that dear Bethlehem, where I have passed

such happy moments. A few days before my departure, a cruel dearth began to be felt there : the distress became extreme, and the immense charities of the monasteries became inadequate to relieve it. I was myself overwhelmed with the applications of the Bethlehemiters, who were in want of bread, and sorely grieved at the state of their families.

Here the calamity is felt even yet more severely : it extends, as it seems, over all Palestine. In the memory of man, provisions have not been so scarce and so dear. The supplies which the pacha of Acre, who had long foreseen the siege of his capital, was obliged to collect, have singularly contributed to this famine. On the other hand, the army of Egypt, which is now blockading that fortress and inundating the country, runs away with all the rest of the produce of an unfortunately sterile year. The distress is at its height. You meet every where persons with pale, emaciated faces, scarcely covered with rags, who stop you at every step, holding forth to you a lean and shrivelled hand. Little children, weeping, ask their parents for bread ; and they, dying themselves of hunger, can only answer them by sighs and tears. This sad and incessant sight rends the heart, and fills it with dismay. The monastery does what it can ; it distributes as many as fifteen hundred loaves per week.

Yesterday afternoon I rode out in the direction of the monastery of Elijah. I had, in the morning, taken a rather long and very fatiguing excursion on foot : the heat was excessive. I had just peeled an orange to quench my thirst. All at once I heard cries behind me ;

I stopped and looked round . . . Two young Arab women, one of whom had a child at her back, were warmly wrangling about the rind of the orange which I had thrown away.

Recollecting at that moment how much money I had formerly squandered in the world, in silly and useless expences ; ah ! how guilty did I then appear in my own eyes ! My blood curdled as I thought of the immense number of distressed persons whom I might have relieved in those days of painful remembrance, when I wearied myself in the pursuit of a false felicity — when I called that happiness, which now I consider as the worst of evils ! I turned back ; I gave and I said to the poor creatures what I could to cheer them ; and, with my eyes turned towards Golgotha, I rode back to Jerusalem, smiting my bosom, more convinced than ever that true happiness consists in imitating the charity of the Saviour, and going about upon earth doing good, like our Jesus.

I now calculate upon staying at the monastery of St. Saviour till Sunday in the Passion week, and then shutting myself up till after Easter in the church of the Holy Sepulchre. I shall continue, as I have already begun, my visits to the interior and to the environs of Jerusalem, wishing to see in the utmost detail all that is remarkable about places or monuments. Unfortunately, it is impossible for the moment to venture so far as the Jordan, the Dead Sea, the monastery of St. Saba, &c. The Arabs, pressed by the famine which afflicts the country, riot, plunder, and murder more than ever ; it would be dangerous to trust one's self upon the high

roads, even though taking all the precautions against them that are sufficient in ordinary times. I had an idea of starting with a trusty Arab, who was to procure me dresses similar to their's; but, the Arabs being extremely spare, the fear of being betrayed by my embonpoint caused me to relinquish my project. I could not persuade myself that the length and thickness of my beard, any more than my tanned complexion, would sufficiently disguise and screen me from danger.

Before I give you an account of my excursions, my dear friend, I think it right to note down here whatever I have been able to collect most likely to convey to you an accurate notion of Palestine, and particularly of Jerusalem. The details, on which I am about to enter, will spare you the trouble of researches which you might otherwise be tempted to make on this subject.

Palestine is a province of Asia, thus named from the Palestines or Philistines,* a powerful people, who came originally from Egypt, and occupied that part of the country extending along the Mediterranean, from Gaza on the south to Lydda on the north. In ancient times it bore the name of Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, and father of a numerous posterity. It was afterwards called the Land of Promise, because God had promised it to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; then the Land of Israel, and finally Judea. This last name was given to it after the return from the Babylonian captivity, because then the tribe of Judah was the only one that formed a body, which was subsequently joined by the

* According to the interpreters, the word *Palestines* or *Philistines* signifies *foreigners*.

wrecks of the other tribes, whose territories were almost entirely occupied by the Samaritans, the Idumeans, and the Philistines.

Since the coming of Jesus, it has been more commonly called the Holy Land, on account of the ineffable miracles wrought there by God ; because the Saviour of the world was born there, lived there, died there, and there rose from the dead ; because its soil was sprinkled with his sweat, with his blood ; and because there is, one may say, not a place in it which he has not marked by the prodigies of his infinite charity.

Before the arrival of the Hebrews, this country was governed by Canaanitish kings, who exercised absolute power in their respective towns. When Joshua had conquered it, he governed it as the lieutenant of the Lord. Joshua was succeeded by the Elders, to whom the supreme authority belonged for fifteen years. After this time the Israelites fell into a sort of anarchy, which lasted seven or eight years, and were then governed by judges, for three hundred and seventeen years ; and lastly by kings, the first of whom was Saul, till the Babylonian captivity, a period of time comprehending five hundred and seven years.

On the return from captivity, Judea was subject to the kings of Persia, then to Alexander the Great, and to the kings of Syria and Egypt, his successors.

The Maccabees, after they had defended their religion by force of arms, and re-established the affairs of their nation, continued for one hundred and thirty five years in possession of the supreme power, and lost it during the reign of Herod the Great. On the death of that

prince, the Romans became absolute masters of Judea, and the kingdom which it formed was utterly destroyed.

One cannot add any thing to the idea which the Scripture furnishes of this country. It is there described as the most beautiful and the most fertile in the world ; yet, at this day, it is in general uncultivated and barren. You meet with whole plains, upon which grows nothing but a few wild plants, shooting up from amidst heaps of stones ; and bald hills, parched by the sun, where the goat can scarcely find a scanty sustenance.

Modern Impiety has not failed to make the present state of these parts an argument against the veracity of the sacred book, and audaciously to insult the spirit of truth by which it was dictated. She has eyes to see, and an understanding to comprehend, the sometimes terrible effects of the blows struck by human justice. She needs no explanation how it has happened that, on the site of the palaces, the pleasure-grounds, the gardens of a great criminal, nothing is left but ruins, nothing grows but thorns and briars. She will tell you both the crime and the punishment ; you will learn of her, whose sentence condemned the culprit, whose hand overthrew those magnificent mansions, laid waste those grounds : all this she knows perfectly well ; she, who, all-powerful for a moment, and giving to her excesses the name of *justice*, carried desolation to such a length, and piled such ruins one upon another : but when the question concerns *divine justice*, she can see nothing, comprehend nothing. To her the cross is an object of derision ; the great name, before which every creature ought to bow the knee, excites her contempt. In such dispositions,

wilfully blind, how should she comprehend that an accursed land, that the country of a guilty and reprobate nation, cannot now exhibit the beautiful spectacle of that delicious garden, flowing with milk and honey, which the father of the family gave to his then beloved children, because they had not yet steeped themselves in crime? Let her come hither, like me; let her bring with her somewhat of that love of truth, upon which people who will not any longer be Christians still pride themselves, and I venture to say that she will be obliged to do herself violence, if she does not recognize the anathema pronounced upon a land where was perpetrated the most execrable of the crimes that could fill the world with horror, upon a land where the blood of the Son of God was demanded with loud cries, and sacrilegiously spilt; everywhere she will perceive yet subsisting vestiges of eternal Justice, which at once awaken recollections of the sufferings of the august Victim, and of the vengeance which followed them.

Others, my dear friend, would perhaps strive to explain to you, *humanly*, how this land, formerly so fertile, is become barren, and now presents an aspect so melancholy and so dreary; and I know not exactly what the slanderers of the holy Scriptures would have to reply to them. But how, in fact, can he who has any knowledge of history be surprised that it is thus? What country is there in the world, where fire and sword have committed greater ravages? What country is there in the world, where more blood has been spilled, more carnage taken place? What country is there that has suffered more by war, by famine, and by pestilence? . . . And at this mo-

ment, when I am writing these lines, am I not myself surrounded by these calamities? There is no doubt that, crushed by them, this country will become wholly wild and uncultivated. The springs are disappearing beneath ruins; the soil which covered the mountains, and which was kept up by the labours of an immense population, is rolling down into the plains; the hills, on which once grew the mulberry and the fig, now display nothing but bare and arid rocks; the spots which received a certain degree of fertility from regular and successive supplies of mould, now exhibit only a few scattered plants of broom, and a few box-trees that have struck root in the clefts of the rocks.

And, once more, that which most contributes to render Palestine a desert is the despotic government under which it groans, and the motto of which is *destruction*. It cannot be too often repeated — the Porte daily puts up this wretched country to auction: the pacha who offers most becomes its tyrant. Master of the life of the Arab as well as of his camel, of his horse as well as of his tent, he marks his passage by exactions alone. At sight of his satellites coming to levy the tribute, the population of whole villages abandon their ruined dwellings; and the poor oppressed inhabitants choose rather to die of want, in caverns of the rocks, than to expire under the bastinado of the soldier, who, on his part, enraged at seeing his prey escape, revenges himself by cutting down the olive-tree of the fugitive whom he could not overtake.

But here again, my dear friend, I cannot see any thing *purely human*. This despotism, this tyranny, this ava-

rice, these vexations, Heaven employs as instruments for the execution of the decrees of its inflexible justice; and the Turk, with his crimes — the only thing that is his, and belongs to him by right — the Turk, I say, is, without knowing it, but the executioner who carries into effect the decrees of divine justice.

For the rest, it is to be observed that it is not only the sacred books which extol the primitive fertility of Palestine. If those who, in general, give so freely to pagan writers a credence and a respect which they refuse to the Scripture, had taken the pains to consult profane antiquity, they would there have found testimonies of the same truth that are above suspicion. Hecataeus, who lived in the time of the first Ptolemy, represents this country as extremely populous and abounding in all kinds of fruits. The description given of it by Pliny is not less favourable. Tacitus, Ammianus, Marcellinus, and others, in the passages where they have occasion to mention it, never speak of it but with commendation. Even at this day it seems as if Providence had determined to maintain in that desolate land visible signs of what it would be, but for the curse that rests upon it: in the cultivated parts, the wheat is remarkably beautiful, the bunches of grapes are enormous, the culinary vegetables so excellent that in no country have I eaten better, and I could say the same of many other productions of the soil.

In the things which I have to relate to you concerning Jerusalem, and especially in the long series of calamities which have befallen it ever since its hapless people dared pray to Heaven that the blood of Christ might be

upon them and upon their children, you will discover still more visibly and more grievously the impress of the fearful hand of God.

Jerusalem was built, according to some, in the year of the world, 2023; or, according to others, in 1991, by the high priest Melchisedek. He gave it the name of Salem, which signifies *abode of peace*. Fifty or sixty years after its foundation, it was taken by the Jebusites, descendants of Jebus, son of Canaan. To ensure their conquest, they enlarged the walls, and built a fortress on Mount Zion, which they called Jebus; from the union of this name and that of Salem, according to some interpreters, the new city was called Jerusalem.

Joshua, after he had vanquished and slain Adonibesech in the battle of Gibeon, took this city. At his death the Jebusites recovered it; but the Israelites soon made themselves masters of it again, with the exception of the fortress, which remained in the hands of their enemies, till the moment when David, finding himself in possession of the throne of Israel, went to attack them, drove them out, and chose Jerusalem for the capital of his kingdom. David enlarged it; his son Solomon made it one of the finest cities in the East, and there built that magnificent temple, such a pompous description of which the Bible has handed down to us. After the death of that prince, and during the reign of Rehoboam, his successor, in the year of the world 3033, it fell into the hands of Sesach, king of Egypt, who contented himself with plundering the temple and the king's palace of their treasures, and retired with an immense booty, among which were shields of gold which Solomon had

caused to be made. It was afterwards taken by Joash, king of Israel, during the reign of Amazia; by the Assyrians, in the time of Manasseh; by Nebuchadnezzar four times, in the reigns of Joachim, his son Jechoniah, and Zedekiah. The impious conqueror destroyed every thing with fire and sword, razed the city to its foundations, and carried away its inhabitants into captivity.

Seventy years afterwards Jerusalem was rebuilt and peopled anew, about the year of the world 3468, (others say 3466) by Cyrus, who permitted the Jews to return to their native country. In 3831 it fell into the power of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, who delivered it up to plunder, put to death in the space of three days upwards of eighty thousand of its inhabitants, sold forty thousand, and carried a like number into captivity: but it was retaken by Judas Maccabeus, and afterwards besieged in vain by several sovereigns of Syria. From this period Jerusalem enjoyed tranquillity till the reign of Hircanus and Aristobulus.

In 3941, the quarrels which arose between the two brothers and their reciprocal pretensions to the exclusive royalty, as well as to the high-priesthood, furnished Pompey the Great, the conqueror of Mithridates, with a motive or a pretext for marching to Judea and laying siege to the capital. He made himself master of it, after a struggle of three months—profaned the temple by penetrating into the sanctuary, which it was lawful for the priests alone to enter—insisted on seeing all the treasures, without, however, touching any of them—expressed not only great surprise but warm admiration, on learning that the dangers of the siege, during which his

machines had been almost continually directed against the temple, had not interrupted the ceremonies and the duties of the priests ; he himself prescribed sacrifices to God, adjudged the high-priesthood and the government of the nation to Hircanus, divesting him only of the title of king, and returned to Rome, carrying with him, as captives, Aristobulus and his family.

Twenty-six years afterwards, Herod the Great, the prince during whose reign our Saviour was born, supported by Roman liberality, and having become sovereign of Judea, through the influence of Antony, came in his turn to attack Jerusalem, which for five months made the most obstinate resistance. The Romans, by whose aid he triumphed, perpetrated horrible profanations and cruelties. Plundering, burning, sparing neither rank, nor sex, nor age, they would have left the city a heap of ruins, if he for whom they had fought had not appeased with money the fury of the general and of his soldiers.

At length arrived for that guilty Jerusalem, which, after having put to death the prophets and stoned the messengers of God, had spurned even the Messiah himself, rejected the tenderest advances of his love, and crowned all by his murder ; at length, I say, arrived those disastrous days, of which the infinite charity of the Saviour had warned, while weeping over, her ; those days, when, as he had told her, “ thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou

knowest not the time of thy visitation." (Luke, xix. 43, 44.)

Threatened every day in property and life by Florus, the governor of Judea, and weary of enduring his exactions and his tyranny, the Jews shook off the yoke, flew to arms, and hoisted the standard of revolt against the Romans. By command of Nero, Vespasian hastily proceeded to Palestine, with an injunction to exterminate the rebels, if he could not reduce them to obedience. To allow them time for reflection, he commenced hostilities in Galilee. It was not long before every thing yielded to the swords of his soldiers, excepting Jerusalem alone, to which he laid siege. During these transactions, he was elevated to the empire, and, being obliged to return to Italy, he transferred the prosecution of the enterprize to his son Titus.

This was in the year 70, near the feast of the Passover, when an innumerable population thronged from all quarters to Jerusalem, to attend that solemnity: and this circumstance, which strengthened the confidence of the insurgents and caused them to regard themselves as invincible, is one of those which must make the divine vengeance appear the more striking and the more terrible, as well in their own eyes as in those of the whole world. That immense multitude was divided by factions; the government was in the hands of the most seditious, always more obstinate in proportion as they became more wretched, and determined to withstand to the death not only the valour and courage, but even the generosity and clemency, of the hostile general.

After long continued works, sometimes interrupted,

at others partly destroyed by the hardihood of the besieged, Jerusalem had "a trench cast about her, and was compassed round, kept in on every side," and afflicted with all sorts of calamities. On the 18th of April, the first wall was carried; on the 7th of May, the second fell; on the 7th of July, Antonia's tower was taken; two days afterwards, the perpetual sacrifice ceased for ever. On the 10th of August, in spite of the most positive orders given by Titus to save the temple, that magnificent edifice was consumed by fire. On the 7th of September the last wall was broken down, and on the following day the conqueror entered the city in triumph; the streets, the public places, the houses, were strewn with dead and dying. Fire destroyed the quarters which the siege had spared; the relics of the temple were demolished and the plough passed over those ruins.

I shall not repeat to you the particulars of this tremendous desolation. Heaven, to display its justice to the world, to confound the incredulity of future times and to leave it without excuse — Heaven decreed that the history of that war should be written, among others, by a man whose veracity cannot be questioned; by a man who was at once an actor in and an eye-witness of it; who had direct and public relations with the besieged and the besiegers, with the conquerors and the conquered; by a Jew of the sacerdotal race, at once statesman and warrior, who himself, at the head of his countrymen, fought for fifty days against Vespasian, appeared at the breach, and more than once perilled his life; who finally, while he strikingly displayed the

qualities of an Israelite, of a citizen devoted to the interests of his religion and of his country, nevertheless did such justice to the valour and generosity of the foe, that Titus deigned to sign his book with his own hand, and to deposit it in the library of Rome, as one of the fairest monuments of his glory. It is this man who, without suspecting the task which he had to perform in the plan of Providence, describes to you disasters, discords, carnage, pestilence, hastening, by command of God, to overwhelm the guilty city, to punish it for its sacrilegious iniquity.

I repeat it, my dear friend, and I cannot too earnestly entreat you to take notice, that it is a Jew—a Jew devoted to his nation, who, by his rank, his military talents, his reputation, his eloquence, by the courtesy and consideration paid him by Titus and the Roman generals, was most capable of averting such great calamities, or at least of checking their course. It is in the work of such a Jew that you may find these things recorded. Deicide Jerusalem was visited with a punishment more terrible and of longer duration than any city in the world ever was or ever will be. In vain may Impiety, in her rage against Jesus Christ, search the bloodiest pages of history ; she will find nothing that can compare with the awful picture which Josephus unfolds to your view. One thing astonishes me, my friend ; it is this : that the terrible justice inflicted by the hand of God on guilty Jerusalem does not, in our days, alarm either nations or cities, which, after her example, have dared and still dare to cry in our public places : “ We will not have this God to reign over us, neither he nor those who pretend

to reign by his grace : we will have no other king than him whom we have made for ourselves, no other king than Cæsar !”

They had—yes, those ungrateful Jews had—their Cæsar ; and generous, clement as he wished to appear, he nevertheless permitted his soldiers to rip open the bowels of the besiegers in quest of gold ; he nevertheless commanded their city to be levelled to its foundations, their temple to be razed, and ninety-seven thousand men carried into captivity, after he had winked at the slaughter of the most infirm and aged.

Thus were those robbed, plundered, murdered, who had to Pilate’s face preferred to Jesus a robber, a murderer : and robbery, pillage, and murder, did not cease “till the Roman army, which would never have tired of plundering and killing, no longer found objects on which to wreak its fury.” It is again the Jew, it is Josephus, who tells us this.

Thus too they were scourged by the Romans, and exposed to all sorts of indignities and torments, who had prevailed on these same Romans to deliver up Christ to them, after he had been scourged, after he had undergone the most ignominious torments and outrages. “They were scourged, and, before death, tormented in all possible ways.” It is still the Jew, it is Josephus, who tells us so.

Thus finally were crucified in their turn those who had cried “Crucify him !” and they were executed “at the rate of fifty in a day,” but afterwards in such number, that “scarcely could there be found hands to make the crosses, or place to erect them.” These again are the words of the Jew, of Josephus.

And the children of those from whose lips had issued the horrid blasphemy, if they did not perish, might at least be the first to see attached to the infamous gibbet—their parents, who had wished that the blood of their victim might be upon them and their children; for scarcely thirty-eight years had elapsed since the commission of the great crime.

But to proceed:—After the destruction of Jerusalem, such of the Jews as had escaped the various calamities that fell upon them, lived subject to the Roman domination till the accession of Adrian to the throne. That prince, having resolved to rebuild the walls of their city and to authorize the worship of different nations there, they at first seemed eager to contribute to the success of the undertaking; but soon, seduced by a false Messiah, named Barcochebas, they revolted, committed unheard-of cruelties, and drew down upon themselves the most signal revenge recorded in history, since that inflicted by Titus. The works of the new city were considerably advanced and included Calvary in their circumference; the temple was rebuilding: it was razed, as well as fifty fortresses. Nine hundred and forty-five hamlets and villages were consigned to the flames; nearly six-hundred thousand persons perished; a great number were condemned to slavery and publicly sold; Jerusalem lost its name, and was called after that of the prince *Ælia Capitolina*. The conqueror ordered a statue of Venus to be erected on Mount Calvary; that of Jupiter on the hill of the Resurrection; a marble hog over the gate leading to Bethlehem; and forbade, on pain of death, any Jew not only to enter *Ælia*, but also to ap-

proach or even to look at it from a distance. The ancient name of the city fell so speedily into oblivion, that, during the reign of Diocletian, a martyr being brought for trial before a Roman tribunal, questioned respecting his birthplace, and having answered that he was born at Jerusalem, the magistrate conceived that he was speaking of some town recently built by the Christians.

My preceding letters will have informed you, my dear friend, what happy changes in Palestine succeeded the conversion of Constantine. The capital, which had become entirely pagan, resumed its name; that of *Ælia*, retained for some time longer by the Gentiles, at length fell into disuse. Under the protection of this prince, and by command of his illustrious mother, the idols were overthrown, Christian churches were erected, and in them the pious were at full liberty to worship the Saviour.

The Jews, disheartened by the losses and disasters which Adrian had inflicted on them, durst not make any new attempt till the year 363, when the plan projected by Julian for rebuilding the temple, with a view solemnly to give the lie to the prophecies of Jesus Christ, revived all their hopes. On the formal invitation of that prince, and in compliance with a letter addressed by him to the whole body of the nation, they thronged from all quarters; and, without distinction of sex or condition, they fell to work under the direction of Alypius the superintendent. Men, women, nay, even children, in their best apparel, worked, carried materials, dug the ground, many of them with silver spades; removed it from one

place to another in hods or in the skirts of their garments, and displayed much greater activity than those pagans who were most powerfully actuated by hatred of the Christians and by the encouragements of the apostate emperor. But He, whose oracles Julian thus braved, whose might he defied, rendered all these efforts useless; He decreed that they should subserve to the more absolute fulfilment of prophecy, so that it is owing to these very labours that there is not left one stone upon another. "Awful balls of fire," says, among others, a pagan historian, "bursting from the foundations in frequent eruptions, burned the workmen and made the place inaccessible to them; and, that element continuing to repel them more and more, the enterprize was abandoned.*

In 613, Chosroes II., king of Persia, to avenge the death of his benefactor, the emperor Mauritius, assassinated by Phocas the usurper, penetrated into the empire and marched towards Palestine. Meanwhile Heraclius overthrew Phocas, put him to death, and begged peace of the Persian monarch. The latter replied only by taking Jerusalem, plundering or burning the churches, slaughtering the priests, selling to the Jews, for money, eighty thousand Christians, whom they caused to be put to death, and carrying away with him the treasures, the sacred utensils, and the genuine cross.

In 627, after long hostilities and frequent victories, Heraclius obliged Chosroes to betake himself to flight,

* *Metuendi globi flammarum, prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum, exustis aliquoties operantibus, inaccessum, hocque modo elemento obstinatius repellente, cessavit inceptum.*—*AMMIAN. MARCELLIN. lib. xxiii. c. 1.*

and to retire to his own dominions, where he was dethroned by his eldest son, Syroes, who hastened to make peace, and gave up the true cross; the solemn restitution of which, to the holy city, furnished occasion both to Greeks and Latins for a yearly festival held on the 14th of September, by the name of Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Nine years afterwards, the caliph, Omar I., second successor of Mahomet, one of the most terrible conquerors that have ravaged the world, successively subdued Armenia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, and Palestine; took Jerusalem, after a siege of four months, and brought the whole country under the Musulman dominion. In 643 he was assassinated by a Persian slave, who stabbed him with a knife, and he died of the wound in three days.

From this period till the end of the 11th century, Palestine, under the Mahometan domination, languished in oppression, a prey to poverty, anarchy, and all sorts of vexations. The erection of several caliphats in Syria and Arabia, the frequent contests of the different dynasties with one another, their alternate defeats and triumphs, perpetuated troubles and disorder. Jerusalem changed masters without changing its condition; the persecutions of the Christians who dwelt in that city, and of those who repaired thither from all parts on pilgrimage, became more frequent and more violent under the Fatimite caliphs. The East was no longer sufficient for the fury of the Crescent; the West found itself threatened with an inundation of barbarians. Europe roused herself to prevent the calamity: she assumed the

cross, and went forth to succour her children and to rescue the tomb of Christ.

Under the command of Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of Lower Lorraine, who was followed by his brothers Eustace and Baldwin, accompanied by gentlemen of the most illustrious families, the crusaders set out early in the spring of the year 1096. A man of low stature, with an ordinary countenance, nay, mean-looking, according to some, dressed in a woollen tunic, half covered by a short cloak, disguising under this coarse exterior lofty thoughts and a great heart, marched at their head, barefoot and with the pilgrim's staff in his hand : this was Peter the hermit. In vain did the Greeks strive to stop them : in spite of their efforts, they penetrated into the East.

After successes, chequered by many and cruel reverses, they made themselves masters of Nicæa, several towns of Natolia, Antioch, &c. In 1099, they found themselves beneath the walls of the capital of Judea. Rama and Emmaus surrendered to Godfrey ; while, in another direction, his nephew Baldwin du Bourg, seconded by Tancred, took Bethlehem. The sight of the holy city ; the statements and supplications of the Christians, who, expelled by the Mussulmans, repaired to the camp of the crusaders to implore their succour ; the gratifying thought that a few more efforts would deliver the heritage of Jesus Christ, and gloriously crown all their toils—all concurred to inflame their enthusiasm and to rekindle their zeal. They vowed anew to rescue Jerusalem from the yoke of the infidel or to die martyrs. The preparations for the siege were urged forward with activity ; they braved privations, dangers, the intolerable heat of the

weather, hunger, and parching thirst. All things were soon in readiness—machines, ladders, revolving towers; the whole army confessed its sins and received the holy communion. Soldiers and chiefs flew with equal ardour to the fight. The first attack, which took place on Thursday, the 14th of July, was interrupted only by the darkness of the night, and renewed next morning with fresh vigour. On Friday, at noon, the victory was still uncertain; at three o'clock, the very hour at which the Saviour of the world expired, it was won by the Christians, and their standard floated on the ramparts of Jerusalem, proclaiming to a distance the signal defeat of their enemies.

“Incensed by the threats and the long insults of the Saracens,” says the most celebrated and at the same time the most impartial historian of the Crusades, “exasperated by the hardships which they had suffered during the siege, and by the resistance which they had met with in the city, the crusaders filled with blood and mourning that Jerusalem which they came to deliver, and which they considered as their future home.

“Presently,” he continues, “the carnage became general. Those who escaped the swords of the soldiers of Godfrey and Tancred, encountered the Provençals, equally athirst for their blood. The Saracens were slaughtered in the streets, in the houses; Jerusalem contained no asylum for the vanquished. Some found means to escape death by throwing themselves from the ramparts; others fled in throngs to seek refuge in the palaces, in the towers, and especially in their mosques, where they could not secrete themselves from the pursuit of the Christians.

“The crusaders, having stormed the mosque of Omar, where the Saracens had for some time defended themselves, renewed there the deplorable scenes which had sullied the conquest of Titus. The foot soldiers and the horsemen rushed in pell-mell along with the vanquished. Amid the most tremendous uproar, nought was to be heard but the shrieks and groans of death : the victors trampled upon heaps of dead in pursuit of those who sought in vain to flee. Raymond d’Agiles, an eye-witness, says that, under the porch and in the court of the mosque, the blood was so deep as to reach up to the knees and the bridles of the horses To describe this awful spectacle which war has twice exhibited on the same spot, it will suffice to observe, in the words of Josephus, the historian, that the number of the victims sacrificed by the sword far surpassed that of the conquerors who thronged from all quarters to participate in the slaughter ; and that the mountains contiguous to the Jordan repeated groaning the frightful din that was heard in the temple.

“The mind turns with horror from these scenes of desolation, and can scarcely pause, amid the carnage, over the touching picture of the Christians of Jerusalem, whose chains the crusaders came to break. No sooner was the city taken, than they came forth to meet the conquerors. They shared with them the provisions which they concealed from the search of the Saracens ; and all of them returned thanks together to God who had granted victory to the soldiers of the cross.

“Peter the hermit, who, five years before, had promised to arm the West for the deliverance of the Chris-

tians of Jerusalem, must have witnessed with delight their gratitude and their joy. The believers of the holy city, mingled among the crowd of the crusaders, seemed to seek, to see, only that generous cenobite, who had visited them in their afflictions, and all whose promises had just been fulfilled. They thronged around the venerable hermit: it was to him that they addressed their hymns; it was he whom they proclaimed their deliverer; they related to him the miseries which they had suffered during his absence; they could scarcely believe what was passing before their eyes, and, in their enthusiasm, they were astonished that God should have made use of a single man to rouse so many nations and to work such wonders.

“ At the sight of their brethren whom they had delivered, the pilgrims no doubt recollected that they had come to worship at the tomb of Christ. The pious Godfrey, who had abstained from carnage after the victory, left his companions, and, followed by three attendants, went without arms and barefoot into the church of the Holy Sepulchre. The tidings of this act of devotion soon spread throughout the Christian army; all fury, all animosities, immediately subsided; the crusaders stripped off their blood-stained garments, and headed by the clergy, walked together barefoot and, bareheaded to the church of the Resurrection.

“ When the Christian army was thus assembled on Calvary, night began to fall. Silence reigned in the public places and around the ramparts; nought was heard in the holy city save penitential hymns and these words of Isaiah: ‘ Ye who love Jerusalem, rejoice with

her.' The crusaders then manifested a devotion so warm and so tender, that, according to the remark of a modern historian, you would have said that these men, who had just taken a city by storm and made a horrid carnage, were but then come from a long seclusion and a profound meditation of our mysteries. These unaccountable contrasts are frequently to be observed in the history of the Crusades. Some writers have made them a pretext for accusing the Christian religion ; others, not less blind and not less prejudiced, have endeavoured to excuse the deplorable excesses of fanaticism : impartial history merely records them, and deplores in silence the frailties of human nature.

“ The pious fervour of the Christians only suspended the scenes of slaughter. Policy might persuade some of the chiefs that it was necessary to strike great terror into the Saracens ; they might think too that, if they set at liberty those who had defended Jerusalem, they should have to fight them again ; and that they could not, in a distant country, keep without danger prisoners whose number exceeded that of their own soldiers. The approach of the Egyptian army was moreover announced, and the dread of a new danger closed their hearts against pity. In their council, sentence of death was pronounced upon all the Mussulmans who were left in the city.

“ Fanaticism seconded but too cheerfully this barbarous policy. All the enemies whom humanity or weariness of slaughter had at first spared, and all those who had been saved in the hope of a rich ransom, were put to death. The Saracens were forced to fling themselves from the tops of towers and of houses ; they were

burned alive ; they were dragged from the recesses of cellars into the public places, where they were sacrificed upon piles of carcases. Neither the tears of the women, nor the cries of the young children, nor the sight of the spot where Jesus forgave his tormentors—nothing, in short, could soothe the exasperated conquerors. So great was the carnage that, according to Albert of Aix, heaps of dead were to be seen not only in the palaces, in the temples, in the streets, but also in the most retired and solitary places. Such was the fury of vengeance and fanaticism, that not an eye was shocked by these scenes. The contemporary historians relate without seeking to excuse them ; and in their narratives, full of revolting details, they never betray any feeling of horror or pity.

“ Such of the crusaders whose hearts were not closed against generous sentiments, could not bridle the fury of an army, which, hurried away by the passions of war, deemed that it was avenging the wrongs of religion. Three hundred Saracens, who had sought refuge on the platform of the mosque of Omar, were slaughtered there on the day of the conquest, in spite of the intreaties of Tancred, who had sent them his banner for a safeguard, and was indignant at this violation of the laws of honour and chivalry. The Saracens who retired to the fortress of David were almost the only individuals exempted from the slaughter. Raymond accepted their capitulation : he had the good fortune and the glory to enforce its execution ; and to most of the crusaders this act of humanity appeared so strange, that they were less disposed to praise the generosity of the Count de St. Gilles, than to find fault with his avarice.

“ It was a week before the butchery ceased. Those Saracens who, during this interval, had contrived to evade the pursuit of the Christians, were reserved for the service of the army. The eastern historians, agreeing with the Latins, estimate the number of the Mussulmans slain in Jerusalem at more than seventy thousand. The Jews were no more spared than the Saracens: the synagogue, in which they had taken refuge, was set on fire, and all perished in the flames.

“ Meanwhile the heaps of dead bodies in the public places, the blood spilt in the streets and in the mosques, were liable to generate pestilential diseases. The chiefs issued orders for cleansing the city and for removing a sight which, no doubt, became odious to them, in proportion as fury and vengeance subsided in the hearts of the Christian soldiers. The Mussulman prisoners, who had escaped the sword of the conqueror merely to endure the horrors of slavery, were employed in burying the mangled bodies of their friends and brethren. They wept, says Robert the monk, and they carried the bodies out of Jerusalem. In this painful occupation they were assisted by the soldiers of Raymond, who, being the last that entered the city, and having had but little share of the booty, sought to pick up something among the dead.

“ The city of Jerusalem soon presented a new aspect. In the space of a few days it had changed inhabitants, laws, and religion. Before the last assault it had been agreed, according to the custom of the crusaders in their conquests, that every warrior should remain master and owner of the house or edifice which he should be the first to enter. A cross, a shield, or any other token affixed to

the door, was the title of possession for each of the conquerors. 'This right of property was respected by the soldiers eager after plunder ; and all at once the utmost order prevailed in a city which had been so recently consigned to all the horrors of war. Part of the treasures taken from the infidels was employed in relieving the poor and the orphans, and in decorating the altars of Christ that were re-erected in the holy city. The lamps, the candelabra of gold and silver, and the rich ornaments in the mosque of Omar, fell to the share of Tancred. A chronicle of the time relates that these valuable trophies were sufficient to fill six waggons, and that it took two days to clear and carry them away from the mosque. Tancred divided this rich booty with the duke of Bouillon, whom he had adopted for his liege lord.

“ But the crusaders soon turned their eyes from the treasures promised to their valour, in order to admire a more precious conquest : this was the true cross, carried off by Chosroes, and brought back to Jerusalem by Heraclius. The Christians shut up in the city had secreted it from the Mussulmans during the siege. The sight of it produced the most vehement transports among the pilgrims. ‘ At which thing,’ says an old chronicler, ‘ the Christians were as full of joy as if they had seen the body of Jesus Christ hanging thereupon.’ It was carried in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem, and then replaced in the church of the Resurrection.

“ Ten days after their victory, the crusaders began to think of re-establishing the throne of David and Solomon, and of seating upon it a chief capable of preserving and maintaining a conquest won by the Christians at the

expenditure of so much blood. Prayers, fasts, and alms were enjoined that Heaven might deign to preside over the election which was about to take place. Those who were appointed to choose the king of Jerusalem swore, in the presence of the Christian army, unbiassed by private interest, favour, or affection, to award the crown to wisdom and virtue. These electors, whose names history has not handed down to us, took the greatest pains to study the opinion of the army respecting each of its chiefs. William of Tyre relates that they went so far as to question the attendants and servants of all those who had pretensions to the crown of Jerusalem, and that they made them take an oath to reveal all that they knew concerning the manners, character, and most secret propensities of their masters. The servants of Godfrey of Bouillon bore the most striking testimony to his domestic virtues; and, in their ingenuous sincerity, they found but one fault with him, that of ‘contemplating with an idle curiosity the images and the pictures in the churches, and stopping before them so long, even after divine service was over, that very often he outstayed his meal-times, and the dishes prepared for his table got cold and lost their flavour.’

“At length the electors, after making all the necessary inquiries and maturely deliberating, proclaimed the name of Godfrey. This choice produced the greatest joy in the Christian army, which thanked Heaven for giving it as sovereign and chief him who had so often led it on to victory.”

After the interesting particulars with which the impartial account that you have just read concludes, it is

superfluous for me to tell you that the new king displayed on the throne the qualities of an accomplished and truly Christian sovereign. Unfortunately, he survived his elevation but one year and three days. On the 18th of July, 1100, the Christians had to lament the loss of this excellent prince, who died regretted by all.

Baldwin, his brother and successor, was crowned on Christmas-day in the following year, and reigned eighteen years with glory. Death overtook him amidst his conquests, on the frontiers of Egypt. The royal dignity devolved to his nephew, Baldwin II., who governed three years.

In consequence of his marriage with Melisandra, eldest daughter of Baldwin II., Foulques, count of Anjou, became fourth king of Jerusalem. He died ten years afterwards, from the effects of a fall from his horse. His son Baldwin III. inherited the crown, wore it twenty years, and died of poison. During his reign, St. Bernard preached in the West a second crusade, at the head of which appear Louis VII. and the emperor Conrad.

Amauri I., brother of Baldwin III.—Baldwin IV., son of Amauri, — Baldwin V., nephew of Baldwin IV., successively filled the throne. The first two marked their reign by no action of importance; that of the third was but momentary: he was a child whom disease carried off at the age of eight years. His mother Sybilla, by endeavouring to obtain the crown for her second husband, Guy de Lusignan, gave rise to divisions among the Christians which had the most disastrous results. Factions, eager after authority, were formed: the grantees violently disputed among themselves the right to

govern the state, harassed, persecuted one another, and accelerated the downfall of the holy city.

About this time, Adad, caliph of the Fatimites in Egypt, having chanced to die — Saladin, his visir and general of his armies, caused himself to be proclaimed soldan. Having already won numerous and rapid triumphs, he was marching towards Jerusalem, not suspecting that treachery would facilitate his conquest of the city. On arriving before Tiberias, he gave battle to the Christians, put them to the rout, took prisoner their king Lusignan, who was basely betrayed by Raimond, count of Tripoli; found himself, after a series of successes, before the capital; laid siege to it, and forced it to capitulate on the 20th of October, 1197. His soldiers, in the intoxication of victory, flew to the temple, pulled down the gold cross which adorned its summit, dragged it ignominiously through the streets, and broke it in pieces upon Mount Sion. The churches were forced open and plundered, with the single exception of that of the Holy Sepulchre, which the *generosity* of the conqueror granted in consideration of a sum of money to the Christians of the East, with permission to pilgrims of other nations to visit it, on condition that they should go thither without arms, and pay certain duties, the amount of which he reserved the right of fixing. All the Christians were declared slaves, without any other mitigation of their lot than the right to ransom themselves at the rate of ten gold besants each. Unable to pay so high a ransom, fourteen thousand of them were carried into slavery.

Six years afterwards, Saladin fell ill at Damascus,

and, like Alexander, he knew that he should die. Aware of the nullity of human greatness, he caused the coffin in which he was to be buried to be carried through the city, and the herald who bore this standard of death was ordered to cry : “ Here is all that Saladin, the conqueror of the East, carries with him of his conquests ! ”—words which, without any alteration but that of the names, might serve as a general epitaph for all conquerors of the earth, for all the mighty of a day, who make it tremble but for a moment, and who devour in haste its inhabitants and their treasures, only to be swallowed up by it themselves the next moment, with nothing about them but a paltry winding-sheet.

Allow me to make one reflexion by the way, my dear friend. Have not your eyes and mine beheld those giants of power, to whom a truly pagan adulation has dared to ascribe more than to Heaven itself the empire and government of the world, and all whose majesty has already been devoured by worms at the bottom of a sepulchre ? And might not these new omnipotents, in whose presence princes and people lately bowed the knee, say of themselves even with greater reason than Saladin :—

“ State after state I’ve added to my realm ;
I’ve thrown down twenty kings : and to the tomb
Of all these conquests nought I take with me
Save this one rag ! ”

In 1228, Frederic II., emperor of Germany, who, at the time of his coronation had solemnly sworn to go and fight the infidels, being urged by the pope to fulfil his promise, set out with a numerous army and arrived at Tyre in the month of September. The sultan Meleddin, being alarmed, averted the storm by a treaty, agreeably

to which he restored to the Christians all their prisoners, and put them in possession of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Sidon. Frederic entered the city triumphantly, went to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, placed upon his head Godfrey's crown, which he took from the altar, and which no one thought of offering to him, and shortly afterwards returned to Europe.

Meanwhile the empty title of king of Jerusalem continued to pass from one prince to another, and at every change the pretensions of the rival factions became a source of calamities and disorders not less disastrous than before.

In 1242, the treaty concluded by Meleddin with Frederic, and which was limited to ten years, having expired, the sovereigns of Egypt, taking advantage of the internal troubles, had again made themselves masters of the Holy Land.

About this period, the emir of Damascus, being at war with the sultan, took Jerusalem from him, and was not afraid to incense him by restoring it to the Christians. Vengeance speedily followed. An army of Karismians hastened to the capital, retook it, plundered it, slaughtered the inhabitants, and delivered it in this deplorable state to the successor of the vanquished prince, who had died in the interval.

In 1248, St. Louis, with the intention of fulfilling a vow which he had made to go to the assistance of the Christians of the Holy Land, embarked at Aigues-Mortes, accompanied by almost all the chivalry of France. But Heaven decreed that he should appear in the East only to show the infidels that a Christian king

is much greater in illness and captivity than in the field of battle. A prisoner to the last heir of Saladin, he saw that prince cut off by the hands of assassins; and the murderers themselves paid such profound homage to his royal virtues as to deem them worthy of the throne of Egypt. He excited in them equal astonishment and admiration by his patience and the intrepidity with which he rejected every proposition that was beneath him. "We considered thee," said they, "as our captive, our slave; and it is thou who treatest us as if we were thy prisoners."

From this period, Mameluke chiefs successively ascended the throne of Egypt and oppressed Palestine by their tyranny. In the space of forty-three years, the Christians lost the very last place which they possessed in that country; they were entirely expelled from it in 1291, and an end was put to the second kingdom of Jerusalem, after a duration of eighty-eight years.

The only vestiges of those crusaders whose glorious achievements saved the West from barbarism, and whom anti-christian philosophy calumniates with greater violence and animosity than the Mussulman himself, are to be found in the different orders of religious chivalry which we have seen subsisting till our times. These orders have defended, protected, Europe, as their family; and Europe has destroyed or suffered them to expire, weakly sacrificing them to the irreligion of the age; and perhaps also prompted by that allurements of gold, which at the present day torments her not less than the Turk, the Arab, and the Bedouin.

The Baharite sultans, having no reason to dread the

efforts of the West, and delivered from the Christians of Palestine by the triumphs of Melek-Araf, maintained possession of their conquests from 1291 till 1382. About this time they were overthrown by the Mamelukes of Circassia, who successively placed one of their own body on the throne, and ruled till 1517. Tourmon Bey, the last of those whom they had elevated to the supreme power, having been defeated in two battles by the ferocious Selim I., emperor of the Turks, lost his life in an ignominious manner: he was hanged on one of the gates of Grand Cairo, by command of the conqueror, who became master of all his dominions. Palestine has ever since belonged to the Ottoman emperors, who include in their titles that of "lord and servant of Jerusalem."

I know not, my friend, what effect is produced in your mind by this frightful series of calamities which for so many ages have befallen Jerusalem, and a very faint image of which my pen has rapidly, and as it were running, here set before you; but, if your soul feels all that they make mine feel, I can affirm that they leave you an impression which no language can describe. Eighteen times taken, seventeen times sacked and laid in ruins; after undergoing during the war all the distresses, all the horrors, which attend that scourge; after losing millions of men by famine, by pestilence, by the sword, by fire; maltreated, plundered, sometimes even laid waste during the short intervals of peace; never resting but beneath the sword which her tyrants hold continually suspended over her head; breathing somewhat more freely, if I may be allowed the expression,

only for the time necessary to furnish fresh generations for fresh calamities ; unable to call together the wretched remnant of the innumerable population which formerly she collected annually within her walls, without hosts of enemies instantly rushing upon her to disperse, to crush, and to destroy ; scarcely retaining, out of all the buildings that constituted her ancient glory, more than a few ruins of their first ruins ; feeling torrents of fire boiling in her bowels, ready to burst forth and to consume any one who shall be tempted to endeavour to restore her altars and her splendour, who with this intention shall attempt to replace one stone upon another ; doomed to see both in and around her no other temples than those to which Christian piety repairs to worship the God whom she crucified, and those mosques consecrated to the absurd as well as sacrilegious superstitions of Mahomet, the chief and the pattern of the rulers under whose sabre she groans — does she not exhibit to the world a spectacle of wretchedness, degradation, and desolation, such as the history of no other city in the world presents ? Does she not say to every one who like me comes to look closely at her : “ I am accursed ? ” And should one imagine that a single human mouth could call all this *fatalità*, *chance*, if a stupid impiety had not so called it ?

I know, my friend, that this language of impiety has reached your ears, and that it has excited in you profound indignation ; but you should come hither to see how very pitiful it is. Be no longer surprised that certain men pretend to attribute to chance that which to us Christians the history of religion explains in so

precise, so clear a manner, by showing us, on the one hand, crime; on the other, punishment. The men who talk thus are the same who give to *chance* the honour of the existence and of the course of the sun, rather than admit that a supreme intelligence has launched into space and imparted to it that regularity of motion from which it never deviates. They are sufficiently good logicians to feel that there is danger for them in even admitting that the eye is made to see, the ear to hear, and they will not compromise themselves. *Chance* is a god which does not annoy consciences; he does not punish bad actions.

For my part, my dear friend, when I consider only with the eyes of my reason the long chain of facts and the consequences which they involve, I feel that I must do violence to my understanding to prevent it from arriving at belief. But when I open our sacred books, when I read them *here* on the very theatre of the divine vengeance—oh, how much more clear, more distinct, more luminous, then appears the impress of the hand of God upon Jerusalem! I see it bearing more and more heavily from age to age on the guilty city, because it punishes in her the most heinous of all crimes, and at the same time that there may not pass from the earth a single generation, which, unless it wilfully turns away its eyes, shall not perceive the punishment and derive instruction from it, or remain inexcusable.

The Lord, I am told in the holy Scriptures, chose and sanctified this place, that his name might be there for ever: and his eyes and his heart were to be there perpetually, (II. Chron. c. vii. v. 16) if Jerusalem herself

remained faithful, and the penalty of her infidelity had been signified to her beforehand. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, had warned her of all the calamities that befel her before the coming of our Saviour.

Daniel wrote more than six hundred years before Titus appeared, and I read in Daniel the same predictions that my Saviour *here* uttered, weeping, thirty-eight years before Titus came to fulfil them.

“Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; he shall make it desolate even until the consummation.” (Daniel ix. 26, 27.)

Were I to strive to raise doubts respecting the precise date of these prophecies, could I help avowing to myself that they were written, known, translated, circulated, among the nations long before the events by which they were accomplished?

And suppose, my friend, it could so happen at this day that the obstinacy of some men, too many of whom, alas! I knew before I renounced the world, were to insist, contrary to all evidence, that these prophecies, these oracles, were written after the events occurred, do you think it would be necessary for me to enter into an historical discussion for the purpose of refuting them? I should merely take up Daniel again, and continue to read the destinies of Jerusalem.

“The abomination of desolation shall be in the temple, and the desolation shall continue even unto the consummation and the end.” *

* This passage does not correspond with our received English version, though a correct translation of the Latin Vulgate quoted by the author: “Et erit in templo abominatio desolationis, et usque ad consummationem et finem perseverabit desolatio.” (Daniel, ix. 27.) TRANSLATOR.

It would be curious if any one were to maintain, that Daniel is not yet dead, and that these words were written but yesterday I do not think so. And I am at Jerusalem ; and I see but too plainly, that the desolation still continues.

O, my dear friend ! what a comfort it is to believe in Jesus Christ our Saviour ! and what violence we are forced to do to reason and common sense, if we would withdraw ourselves from his holy law !

Adieu !

LETTER XXIII.

WAY OF THE CAPTIVITY — ROAD OF THE CROSS.

Jerusalem, February 9th, 1832.

I do not believe, my friend, that, among the men whom the interest of the passions, and pride in particular, has most violently inflamed against christianity, there is one who has carried his perverseness so far as to deny the existence of Jerusalem. Not but that, in reading the travels of some of those scientific men, who, from such disgraceful motives have turned their science against God, you perceive, on their arrival in the East, that the sight of Palestine is unpleasant to them, and that they would rather have found no traces of it. Unfortunately for their perverse desires, it is not possible to raise, on this point, the slightest doubt capable of misleading minds ever so disposed to suffer themselves to be seduced. The name of the capital of Judea is connected, as it were, from its very origin, with

the history of contemporaneous nations. Advancing through the intermediate ages to the time of Jesus Christ, it is found so frequently repeated in books and in monuments, that, to get rid of it, you must tear out the most remarkable pages, not only of the Jewish but also of the Pagan historians: and again, those annals, thus mutilated, would proclaim, by the chasms which they would present, what mutilations they had suffered from hands inimical to truth.

It would not be less difficult to dispute, with any show of reason, in its essential points, the situation of ancient Jerusalem, of its stream, of its fountains, of its walls, of its quarters, of its temple, of its principal buildings, &c. Had we but the description left us by the Jew, to whom I referred in my last letter, that alone would be sufficient to justify the greater part of Christian traditions, relative to places. The plan of the holy city transmitted to us by Josephus is so detailed, so precise, that, after the eighteen hundred years which have passed over these ruins, the genius of architecture would be capable of setting it again, in a manner, before our eyes, if the curse of divine justice did not oppose an invincible obstacle to the attempt.

On the other hand, the public personages, the legislators, the kings, the princes, the great men, those who exercised any power, religious or civil, who, by the importance of the part which they acted on the stage of the world, have acquired any celebrity — who, by splendid actions, by virtues, or by crimes, have influenced the destinies of nations — all these personages are so closely connected with the places, that the names of both,

according to the periods, are met with together as though they were indissolubly united. How then is it possible, with any appearance of reason, to deny the authority of history? The first temple of Jerusalem will ever remind you of Solomon and his glory ; Calvary will ever repeat the sufferings and death of Jesus, much more strongly than Rome and Athens, in their origin, will call up recollections of Romulus and Cecrops.

To these considerations, my dear friend, add the continuity and character of the evidence. At Jerusalem, before it was destroyed, there were Christians, and in great number. Among these numerous Christians, several had become so on seeing the miracles which the life of Christ is full of : they had frequently been among his followers, both in Jerusalem, and even in the mountains and the hamlets of Judea : some had been particular objects of his beneficence. Others, eye-witnesses too, of the same transactions, had been converted after the resurrection, or later, by the early preaching of the Apostles : all of them, full of confidence in the words of their divine Master, and expecting no other happiness but that which his doctrine promised them, habitually fed their hopes with the recital or the remembrance of the wonders which had accompanied his birth, his life, his sufferings, his death, his glorious resurrection from the grave ; all of them were accurately acquainted with the places where such great things were accomplished : they conversed about them, visited them, made it a duty of religion to point them out to the piety of the new believers, who were daily joining the infant Church ; and it may be affirmed that their faith, their knowledge,

their love, had not only followed and watched, but, in some sort, marked every step of the Saviour's. Have the war with the Romans, the desolation of the city, the destruction of its walls and its temple ; in short, all that at this day a lying incredulity opposes to the truth of the traditions, been able to change, to distort, the positions, to displace the hills, the stream, to cause the respective situation of places so often traversed, visited, honoured with such reverence, to be forgotten ? Of all that impiety has made such a noise about, it is the buildings alone that have mostly disappeared ; and what thence results for the traditions ? why this — that the fathers of those days, when it was impossible for them to point out to their children those edifices *standing*, used, in describing them and indicating their sites, a language, alas ! too much like that which, amidst the desolations of our days, other fathers, our contemporaries, have been obliged to address to their sons :

“ Under that heap of stones is the site of Herod's palace ” — “ Beneath the ruins of those walls was the Lithostrotos, where Jesus was condemned to death ” — “ Under those fragments of pilasters our Saviour met his mother ” — “ Near those shattered arcades the Son of God spoke to the holy women ” — “ That pillar, which stands alone amidst so many destructions, was on one side of the door of the Judgment hall, and to it was affixed the sentence pronounced by Pilate,” &c. &c.

And whatever there was sad or painful in the contemplation of the ruins served to engrave the facts more deeply upon the mind, by more powerfully affecting the heart.

But the means to which I have been referring, my dear friend, and by the aid of which, in general, facts are preserved for ages, and transmitted from generation to generation, seem on this occasion not to have been sufficient for the wisdom of Providence. In the divine economy of its designs, it decreed that the greatest enemies of the cross should be the very persons who should point out to the Christians the various theatres of the ignominy, the insults, the sufferings, of the Son of God, and that of his death. Assuredly, nothing was farther from the thoughts of the pagan emperors than the intention to undertake such a task. When, however, absolute masters of Jerusalem, out of hatred to the new religion, and with the sole aim of strangling it in its cradle, they selected in preference the places which it recommends most to the reverence of its children, for the purpose of erecting on them temples, altars, statues, to the deities of Rome; what did they but proclaim that, on the very spots where paganism dared set up its vain idols, its Jupiter, its Adonis, its Venus, were accomplished the most awful mysteries of redemption and salvation? And since the Crescent has in its turn ruled over hapless Jerusalem, what else is again done by the avarice of the pachas, in selling at a high price the access to those same places, the approach to which was formerly prohibited by the impurity of an idolatrous worship or by menaces of death, without, however, being able to cause them to be forgotten? There is nothing, not excepting the very filth with which the Turkish populace takes a hideous delight to pollute certain spots, certain buildings, certain ruins, but serves to keep up

the traditions, and contributes to point out to the pilgrims who throng from all parts of the world to the Holy Land the points to which Christian piety is most powerfully attracted, where the heart is filled with sentiments of love and gratitude, more intense, more ardent, more generous, more tender, more worthy of Jesus Christ.

It was to precisely this theatre of the passion of my Saviour that, on my return from Bethlehem, my first thoughts were directed. I have spent several days in examining it, not, as on my first arrival at Jerusalem, in haste and confining myself to the principal points, but taking them all in regular succession, and in the order of the events marked in the evangelical history, beginning with the Way of the Captivity, which comprehends the whole space traversed by Jesus Christ, from the moment of his apprehension till that when Pilate, too weak to use his authority in behalf of innocence, in the hope of softening the multitude and disarming its fury, showed to it him for whose blood it was clamouring, clad in robes of mock royalty, and covered with wounds, saying : " Behold the man ! "

Accompanied by Jacob, my dragoman, who speaks Turkish and Arabic fluently, I sallied forth by St. Stephen's Gate. We descended the hill on which that martyr was stoned, and, having crossed the bridge over the brook Cedron, we found ourselves at the first station, at Gethsemane, in that sacred garden which Jesus bedewed with his sweat and his blood, where he was taken and bound, to be thence dragged to Jerusalem. The painful thoughts which had assailed me on my first visit

again rent my soul. The spot where the Saviour was betrayed by the kiss of the infamous Judas, that where the august Victim presented himself to the soldiers who came to seize him, excited in me all the indignation that I had felt the first time ; it seemed as though I were present at the scene of horror described by St. John :

“ And Judas also which betrayed him knew the place, for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

“ Judas, then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief-priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

“ Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said unto them : Whom seek ye ?

“ They answered him : Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them : I am he. And Judas also which betrayed him stood with them.

“ As soon then as he had said to them : I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground.

“ Then asked he them again : Whom seek ye ? and they said : Jesus of Nazareth.

“ Jesus answered : I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.

“ That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake : Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.” (John, xviii. 2 — 9.)

Methought I saw—I did see, those soldiers, that multitude, those torches, those staves, and those swords : I heard the questions repeated by the Saviour, who knew all things, and the answers of those furious men : I witnessed the terrible effect of those words : “ I am he”

— words so simple, so modest, so mild, and which nevertheless proved, to those to whom they were addressed, a thunder-bolt that made them start back and fall to the ground: and, in the transports of ardent gratitude, I admired that divine goodness, which, accepting for itself all sorts of insults, ill treatment, and sufferings, was anxious only to preserve the disciples from them, that he might not lose any of those whom his Father had given him, any of those who were his.

It was near the grotto of the Agony that Jesus, giving himself up voluntarily and freely to death by these words : “ I am he whom ye seek,” held forth his divine hands to the soldiers who bound them. Having proceeded for some time along the bank of the Cedron, they crossed the brook. A tradition relates that our Lord, being violently pushed by them, fell at the foot of the bridge, where is still to be seen the print of two knees on a rock, which is held in great veneration. The ground contiguous to it has been purchased by the Armenians.

The soldiers then forced Jesus to ascend Mount Zion, and proceeded towards the house of Annas, an aged priest, and father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high-priest for that year, the same who had declared to the Jews that it was *expedient* that one man should die for the people.

This house of Annas the chief-priest, or, to speak more correctly, the church erected on its ruins, forms the second station. Here is now seen a convent of Armenians ; it stands near David’s gate, almost at the foot of Mount Sion. In the church, on the left, is pointed out the place into which Jesus was put, before he was taken to the high-priest.

Close to this is the site of the hall where Jesus, having been ushered into the presence of the aged priest, impatient to feast himself on the sight of his humiliations, was questioned by him concerning his doctrine and his disciples, and struck by one of the officers of the palace, for having answered frankly and truly :

“ I spake openly to the world ; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me ? ask them which heard me ; they know what I said.”

From the house of Annas, Jesus was conducted to the palace of Caiaphas, where is the third station.

It was in this palace that Caiaphas called together at night the priests, the doctors of the law, the senators, the scribes and the Pharisees, before whom he caused Jesus to be brought. It was there that, in the name of the living God, the divine Saviour was adjured by the high-priest to say if he was the Christ, the Son of God, and that, when he answered, “ I am he,” he was declared a blasphemer ; and, as such, deserving of death.

The site of the palace of Caiaphas is on Mount Sion, beyond the present walls of Jerusalem. The Greeks have built a monastery upon it. Some travellers make mention of the hall in which our Lord was questioned, and exposed to insults and outrages, as though it were still in existence. This is erroneous : I have in vain examined the whole building without discovering anything that exhibits the least vestige of it : I have questioned the Greeks and the monks ; but they have no idea of the kind.

The most remarkable thing I saw is the court, through which the just and innocent Jesus, escorted by his implacable enemies, passed to be taken before the tribunal of blood, which had already pronounced his sentence. It was in this same court that Peter had the weakness to deny his master thrice, in consequence of his having ventured, from curiosity, from a desire "to see the end," into a place whence truth and justice were banished; into a place where Jesus was a prisoner; a place of which his persecutors and tormentors were the masters: a painful as well as terrible image of the fall of those presumptuous men whom a vain curiosity sometimes detains in the company of the wicked, causing them to brave the danger of betraying their faith; or of those also who, foremost to shew their attachment to justice while she triumphs, hasten with cowardly prudence to conceal their sentiments as soon as persecution takes place, especially when it appears likely to last; who, deeming it *wise* to await the event in order openly to obey or to disobey their conscience, insensibly take interest, the mere interest of the moment, for their guide, gradually come to care only about those who can be useful to them, and end by an open and shameful apostacy, as soon as the cause of justice seems to them to be ruined.

Within the monastery there is a very pretty little church, kept extremely neat and adorned with magnificent tapestry. The altar is formed out of the stone which closed the entrance to the Holy Sepulchre. Beside this altar is a small room where you are told Christ was obliged to wait till he was taken into the presence of the high-priest.

On Friday, the 3rd of April, at day-break, Jesus, surrounded by a bloodthirsty crowd, was dragged to the palace of Pilate, which is the fourth station. He walked in silence amid the throng, headed by the high-priest, the doctors, and the elders of Judah. They went back along the foot of Mount Sion, entered Jerusalem by the Sterquilinian gate, and, passing the Temple, arrived at the Pretorium.

“They would not enter it,” says the evangelist, “lest they should be defiled, and prevented from eating the passover.”

Thus have there been frequently seen, thus have we ourselves but too often seen wicked men, men athirst for blood, or already stained with it, mingling with their cruelties and their injustice vain scruples not adverse either to rapacity or pride, affecting a sort of tenderness of conscience, and seducing the simple by an appearance of religion.

These chief-priests, these senators, fearful of defiling themselves by entering the abode of a heathen magistrate, but who had no fears of defiling themselves when they bought of Judas the prisoner whom they have condemned, and on whose death they are bent—they, who presently will not be afraid to defile themselves with lies and calumnies, in order to wreak their revenge, stop, from religious scruples, at the door of Pilate, who is obliged to go out to give them audience. They denounced to him Jesus as a malefactor : they accused him of exciting the people to rebel, of forbidding the payment of tribute to Cæsar, of calling himself the Christ, of usurping the rights as well as the title of a king ; and they had no

doubt that, on their report, Pilate would without farther examination become their accomplice, and immediately pronounce sentence of condemnation. They were disappointed: a feeling of natural equity, very rarely met with, on similar occasions, in a magistrate guided solely by human prudence, at first impelled Pilate to do his duty. He was desirous of learning the motives on which such heavy charges were founded: he went back into the Pretorium, ordered Jesus to be brought before him, questioned him, was told by him that he really called himself a king, but the king of a kingdom which is not of this world: and comprehending, though a gentile, much better than many Christians since his time have comprehended, that such royalty has nothing in common with the royalty of the princes of the world, that it could excite no just alarm for the Cæsars and their throne, he returned, accompanied by Jesus, to his accusers, and solemnly declared that he found no fault at all in him.

But at this moment there was a burst of complaints, murmurs, shouts, fury; and here began to be betrayed that weakness which was soon to lead to the consummation of the iniquity on the part of the Roman governor, and to the death of the innocent victim. Amidst the tumult, the chief priests cried out that Judea and Galilee were excited to revolt by the seditious discourses of Jesus. At the word Galilee, Pilate, already alarmed by the uproar, and apprehensive of the consequences, recollected that this country was under the jurisdiction of Herod, and thenceforward he was anxious only to get rid both of the accused and the accusers. He sent them, therefore, to the tribunal of the tetrarch, thus

timidly referring to his decision charges submitted to his authority, charges which he had consented to examine, the falsehood of which he had himself ascertained, and on which he had definitively pronounced.

The Pretorium, as I have already had occasion to remark, is now nothing but ruins. The existing buildings are occupied by the Turkish governor. There is still to be seen the porch of red marble, which served for the entrance: it is in good preservation. One can no longer pass through it, because it has been walled up; but its colour renders it perfectly distinguishable.

The staircase by which our Saviour ascended has been removed to Rome, where it is an object of reverence, under the name of *Scala santa*.

You ascend, at the present day, by a way which leads to a spacious court, on the right of which are two long vaults conducting to the gallery, then called *Xistum* or *Xistus*. The distance from the preceding station to this is at least thirteen hundred paces.

The fifth station is at the palace of Herod. "And when Herod saw Jesus," says the evangelist, "he was exceeding glad, for he had desired to see him of a long season Then he questioned with him in many words, but he answered him nothing."

Jesus did not even tell him why he would not answer him; thus punishing, by absolute silence, the pride of him who thought to subject divine wisdom to the caprices of his vain curiosity. But the prince, blind as all those who will not comprehend the things of God, saw nothing but idiocy in a silence which was the chastisement of the hypocrisy with which he strove in some

measure to put to the test the knowledge and the power of the incarnate God ; and, passing from curiosity to a not less impious scorn, he ordered him to be arrayed in a white robe, exposed him in this garb of derision to the insults and mockery of the populace, and sent him back to Pilate.

Of the palace where these sacrilegious scenes took place nothing is left but ruins, upon which now stand a few houses inhabited by Turks.

The last station of the Way of the Captivity is, like the first, at the Pretorium, whither Jesus was led back. The Roman governor, who, by his first compliances, had emboldened the calumniators, was affrighted at their audacity, and took a fresh step in iniquity. He knew that the "just man," whose fate was in his hands, had been delivered up to him out of envy alone. He still wished to save him from death ; but, despairing of gaining a complete triumph for his innocence, he pronounced one of those decisions which violence never extorted but from fear ; one of those decisions which have the inevitable effect of thenceforward laying the magistrate at the mercy of the wicked, and of hurrying him irrevocably into a first double dealing, the mere idea of which, at the outset, would have filled him with horror.

"I will chastise him," said Pilate, "and let him go:" and he ordered Jesus to be scourged. Ferocious soldiers lacerate with rods or with leathern thongs the body of him in whom the judge had just before publicly declared that he could find no fault at all. The blood starts under the repeated strokes ; they throw over his mangled shoulders a tattered purple garment, put a reed into his

hand, place a crown of thorns upon his head, thrust it down with violence, buffet him, spit in his face, and to these cruel outrages they add a mockery still more cruel: they kneel before him and say in horrible derision: "Hail, king of the Jews!"

It was this moment that Pilate chose to show him to the council of the Jews and to the people. He went up to the Lithostrotos, dragging after him Jesus, exhausted with fatigue, anguish, and ill-usage; and there, from a gallery which now bears the name of the arcade of the Ecce-Homo, he presented him to the impatient eyes of the multitude. "Behold the man!" he exclaimed; and the timid governor, who, out of compassion, thought it his duty to appear inhuman, persuaded himself that, at the sight of so strange a crown, purple robe, and sceptre, the royalty of Jesus, far from being a subject of alarm, would but excite scorn, or perhaps pity, flattered himself that the cruelties which he had authorised, and the bleeding image of which he placed before the eyes of the infuriated mob, would prevent the excesses in which it was desirous of indulging!

"Behold the man!" repeated the tigers, athirst for blood. "Crucify him! crucify him! let him be crucified!" and cries of death were raised on all sides. The din of the populace, the increasing tumult, the imprecations, the maledictions, the threats of the wrath of Cæsar, the fear of a general insurrection, agitated, alarmed, disconcerted the magistrate, and gave him up a prey to all the torments that can assail a conscience which, out of weakness or fear, hesitates between the duty of saving an innocent man and the crime of

ordering him to be attached to a cross. A feeling of equity for a moment pervaded his mind: he called for water, washed his hands in public, and exclaimed: "I am innocent of the blood of this just person," and, almost at the same moment, seeing nothing but danger in resistance to the popular fury, and by a contradiction the more disgraceful, he pronounced sentence of death, and delivered up that "just person" to be crucified.

The hall where Christ was scourged is now a most filthy place, opposite to the ruins of the Pretorium and in the same street. Scarcely is there to be seen in it a spot on which the knee can rest. Part of the pillar to which Jesus was bound is in the church of the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Sepulchre, protected by an iron grating; and you are not allowed to touch it but with a stick of copper. It is exhibited to the veneration of the pious only once a year, on the evening of Good Friday.

In the basement of the Pretorium is a hall, in very good preservation. Here it was that the soldiers threw a robe over the shoulders of Jesus and crowned him with thorns. While the divine Saviour was exposed to their mockery and insults, he was supported by a fragment of a column, now preserved in a chapel of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, of which I have already made mention to you, and which belongs to the Armenians. This fragment, as well as the chapel, is known by the name of *Impropère*, that is, insults, outrages.

The arcade of the *Ecce Homo* was formerly part of a very spacious porch. Above, there has been built a kind of gallery, closed on one side by a wall, in which have been made some very small *apertures*. In the opposite

wall is a window, at which, according to some, Jesus was obliged to appear when Pilate presented him to the people. I am of opinion, with some others, that the gallery was then entirely open.

Now, my dear friend, come along with me to the Road of the Cross: let us explore that sacred road together, and let thoughts of grief, repentance, gratitude, and love, thoughts which the great sacrifice of our Redeemer devoting himself, dying for us, ought to render ever present to our minds as well as to our hearts, accompany our steps.

Originally, the Road of the Cross was divided into twelve stations; now there are reckoned fourteen, because that of the taking down from the cross and that of the Holy Sepulchre have been added.

Nine of these stations are in the streets forming the Via Dolorosa, so that the pilgrim is obliged to refrain from all external signs of piety, if he would avoid the insults and outrages of which Turkish fanaticism is not sparing. I have sometimes ventured to disregard this unworthy treatment; but I would not advise any one to imitate my temerity. On a way bordered exclusively by Turkish habitations, and frequented by all sorts of persons, it is better to confine one's self to an inward prayer than to provoke abuse and blasphemies. One day, before the house of St. Veronica, I suffered some demonstration of respect to escape me, and instantly a pot of water was flung over me from a window. The wisest thing I could do was not to say a word about it: I passed on in silence.

To satisfy their devotion in some trifling degree, most

of the pilgrims seek to touch by stealth the object which marks the station, though frequently covered with spittle, and then to lay their hand upon their heart.

The first station in the Road of the Cross begins at the very spot where the last in the Way of the Captivity ends ; that is, at the Lithostrotos, where Jesus was condemned to die upon the cross.

The Lithostrotos, called in Hebrew Gabbatha, was a terrace, or even a gallery, a kind of balcony paved with marble or stone, as its name indicates, from which Pilate pronounced the sentence of death. It was contiguous to the Pretorium. It is now inclosed in the residence of the Turkish governor. As the avenues to it are guarded by janissaries, you perform this first station at the porch of the Scala, situated in the lowest part of Jerusalem. Formerly, the pilgrims were allowed to go up to the arcade ; according to some travellers, the places where Jesus stood when he was condemned, and where the Roman governor addressed the people when he passed sentence, were pointed out. "The pilgrims who have the honour to ascend it," says a writer of the time, "fall on their knees before the first, and kiss it with great respect, but abhor and execrate the second as they would the seat of the plague."

The second station is on the spot where Jesus, delivered up to his implacable enemies, was hurried away through a furious mob, loading him with imprecations, to be burdened with his cross, which he was to bear to Calvary. There is nothing to indicate the exact point of this station. After the example of other pilgrims, I held it about twenty paces from the first.

To reach the third, you must pass under the arcade of the Ecce Homo. At the end of the street, turning to the left, near a Turkish bath you come to a prostrate column of red marble, which, according to tradition, marks the spot where our Saviour fainted for the first time under the weight of the instrument of his execution.

Forty paces farther, you enter a street which leads to the Via Dolorosa, in which there was formerly a church, known by the name of Notre Dame des Sept-Douleurs : this is the fourth station. On this spot it was that Mary, thrust back by the soldiers, met her son toiling under the weight of the ignominious wood on which he was about to die. Without making explicit mention of this meeting, the evangelists infer it in their narratives by showing us the blessed Virgin on Calvary, at the moment of the death of Jesus ; and the tradition of it, which is still preserved, supported by the testimony of several great saints, dates from very high antiquity.

Sixty paces farther begins the fifth station, at the foot of the hill which leads to Golgotha. Here it was that Christ, exhausted by his long sufferings, stumbled ; and that the Jews, eager for his blood, stopped a Cyrenean, and forced him to bear the cross. “ And, as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenean, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.”

Proceeding about eighty paces, you come to the sixth station. It is the house of Veronica, or, more correctly speaking, the spot on which stood that house, the very ruins of which have disappeared, and on which is now seen the dwelling of a Greek family. You are shown the

place where that heroic woman, forcing her way through the soldiers and the crowd which surrounded Jesus, and, throwing herself at his feet, wiped his distorted features, the impression of which was left upon the cloth which had touched the august face of the Saviour of the world.

About one hundred paces from the house of St. Veronica is the Judgment gate, through which malefactors passed who were to be executed on Calvary. This gate is walled up for half its height; behind, you can perceive the stone pillar on which the sentence of Pilate was posted. It is upright, and may be seen at a distance.

It is about eighty paces from the Judgment gate to the place where Jesus fell, for the second time, under the weight of his cross, which forms the seventh station. It is marked by an incision made in a stone in the wall.

From the Judgment gate to the top of Calvary, the ascent begins to be steeper.

The eighth station is about thirty fathoms from the preceding. It may be known by a thick column, placed before a doorway of mean appearance, and which is walled up. It was there that Christ spoke to the women of Jerusalem, who were shedding tears over his fate, and exhorted them to weep for themselves.

The way which formerly led to Calvary, and along which our Saviour passed, no longer exists; it is covered with houses, amidst which is the ninth station, likewise marked by a thick column, the approach to which Turkish fanaticism has taken delight to render disagreeable, by heaping up filth against it for the purpose of keeping off the Christians. To visit the holy hill, the pilgrim is obliged to follow a new way formed at the distance of fifty paces.

The tenth and the last four stations are in the immense church of the Holy Sepulchre, which, as I have already had occasion to remark to you, contains the place where Jesus was stripped of his garments and gall was handed to him to quench his thirst; that where he was nailed to the cross; Calvary, where he expired upon the cross; and the tomb in which he was laid.

I have thus, my dear friend, described to you briefly, but as accurately as I could, the places which our Saviour traversed in the course of his long passion. The facts which this sketch presents for our meditation had been foretold seven hundred years before by Isaiah, and God had then shown them as if accomplished. The prophet had seen the man of sorrows suffering and dying for us. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he had written.

“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, yea, to put him to grief.” (Isaiah, liii. 5 and 10.)

At no time and in no place will these wounds with which Jesus was covered for our transgressions, that chastisement which was upon him and which earned our peace, those stripes by which we have been healed, that bruising for our iniquities, produce a deeper, a more salutary, a more efficacious impression than at Jerusalem, and on the way itself which was moistened by the tears, the sweat, and the blood of Christ.

When, turning over the annals of human justice, I there read the punishment inflicted by it on a malefactor, let it be stamped with ever so little of an unjust and use-

less severity, I am apt to forget the crime and feel concern for the perpetrator : the voice of humanity silences that sentiment of rigid equity, which tells my reason that the criminal ought to be punished and society avenged ; and I find in my heart nothing but pity.

If, casting my eyes farther, I chance to fix them upon a sentence in which Justice has erred, if evident proofs of the innocence of him on whom her sword has fallen are unfolded to my view, strange as this man may be to my affections, to my religion, to my country, my soul is moved, is filled with indignation, groans, deploras the mistake or the accursed iniquity, and the punishment of the condemned becomes to me also a punishment.

But here, continuing to turn over the history of human judgments, I am suddenly stopped by one of those sentences of death which are but too common in those accursed periods, fortunately rare in the course of ages, when things and actions the most glorious, the most honourable, have lost their character of honour and glory ; when even the affections, when the tenderest, the purest, the most sacred ties are considered by the law and its organs as merely a sort of complicity with the persons to whom these affections, these ties, unite us. It is a sentence which sent to the scaffold a father, in whom the justice *of the time* thought fit to punish the crime of a son whom paternal tenderness refused to deliver up to the executioner ; and this father died resigned, content, joyful, at thus saving the life of his son ! Oh ! then I can no longer control the emotions that agitate my soul : thoughts the most agonizing, the most soothing, crowd upon it, jostling and driving back one another ; and,

amid this conflict, which becomes to me an inexpressible torment, a voice, bursting from my bosom, cries: Ah! had that father been thy father!

“Had that father been my father!” At this last idea, words fail me; and I suffer my tears to flow in silence.

How would it be, if, all at once transported to the very spot where this father was tried, dragged to execution, sacrificed, I were to penetrate into the hall where this iniquitous sentence was pronounced; I were to see there, with my own eyes, both the place where sat the judges and that occupied by him whose only crime was to have given me life and to love me; if, going thence, I were to traverse the way which he passed to suffer, and reaching the very spot where the scaffold was erected, treading the very ground that was stained with his blood

What am I about, my dear friend! all this will not tell you what my soul here feels. He who passed along the Road of the Cross, whose steps I have followed from Gethsemane to Calvary, is to me and to all Christians more than a benefactor, more than a friend, more than a father: it is the innocent Jesus, sacrificing himself for the guilty; it is my Redeemer, my Saviour, my God!

LETTER XXIV.

MOUNT OF OLIVES — VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT — BROOK CEDRON —
CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN MARY — TOMBS OF JOSEPH, JOACHIM, AND
ANNA — ADMIRABLE VIEW OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES — FOOT-PRINT
LEFT AT THE ASCENSION — CHAPEL ON THE SPOT WHERE CHRIST
TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES THE LORD'S PRAYER — PLACE WHERE THE
APOSTLES COMPOSED THE PROFESSION OF FAITH.

Jerusalem, February 20th, 1832.

I continue my excursions, my dear friend, sometimes on horseback, at others on foot, sometimes in company,

sometimes alone ; and, whatever I may have been told, my heart frequently brings me back to the Via Dolorosa. The Turks begin to get used to my dress, and to my spectacles, which at first excited great notice. Most of them take me for a physician, and I am sometimes stopped in the streets both by men and women, who insist on my feeling their pulse. This reputation of physician originated in a petty lie of my dragoman's, who hazarded it one day to facilitate for me the approach to Omar's mosque.

The mistaken notion of the people respecting my profession gave rise to visits and to solicitations which became extremely annoying to me. I have therefore positively enjoined Jacob to contradict the reports which he had himself circulated on this subject, and I am somewhat quieter ; I say somewhat, because several persons suppose that it is but a subterfuge on my part.

Hitherto I have been but rarely insulted : some stones have been flung at me ; I received them, if I may be allowed to say so, with all the resignation, all the submission of a pilgrim wending his way along the Via Dolorosa ; or, if you please, I affected not to notice these insults : it was the only way to put an end to them.

My favourite walk is to the Mount of Olives. The way thither leads through St. Stephen's gate and the valley of Jehoshaphat ; you cross the brook Cedron over a bridge of a single arch. On reaching the foot of the hill, you have on your left the church which contains the tombs of the Virgin Mary, Joseph, Joachim, Anna, and the grotto of the Agony ; on the right is the garden of Gethsemane, which I have already described. I will

say a few words concerning those places, of which I have not given you any account.

The valley of Jehoshaphat is called in Scripture the valley of Sara, the Royal Valley, the valley of Melchizedek. Hither it was that the king of Sodom came to congratulate Abraham, after the victory gained by that patriarch over the five kings. It is situated between the Mount of Olives and Mount Moriah. Its appearance is extremely gloomy : the Gothic walls of Jerusalem, which crown it on the west side, throw over it a shadow, a kind of darkness, well adapted to make the mind persevere in those serious reflections which the very name of Jehoshaphat must naturally excite. It appears to have been in all ages a place of sepulture : the eye cannot there rest upon any thing but trophies of death. You find tombs of the highest antiquity ; you find others of yesterday. It is towards this valley that the Jews, scattered over the face of the earth, cast their eyes ; thousands of them, even in the flower of their age, quit the country of their birth, in the hope of being one day buried there. Their sepulchral stones are innumerable ; they completely cover the Mount of Offence,* extend along the brook Cedron, and rise behind the tombs of Absalom, Zachariah, and Jehoshaphat, to the road leading to Bethany. The village of Siloa is so encompassed by them, that it appears to form part of this vast cemetery of the Israelites.

The valley of Jehoshaphat is a valley of mystery. Its name, which signifies the judgment of God, awakens in the mind thoughts at once soothing and awful, an ineffable mixture of hope and fear.

* A name given to this mount when Solomon became a backslider.

According to the prophet Joel, mankind shall here appear some day before the supreme Judge. "I will gather all nations, and will bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and plead with them there."

I had brought with me Massillon's Sermon on the Last Judgment: imagine, if you can, what conflicting feelings and emotions seized my soul, when, seated on a solitary rock in that valley, the genuine region of death, and full of the thought of the dreadful day of retribution and punishment, I read the following words:

"What a change of scene in the world! Then will all scandals be removed from the kingdom of Christ, and the righteous, completely separated from the sinners, will form a chosen nation, a holy race, the church of the first-born, whose names will be written in heaven; then will the commerce with the wicked, inevitable upon earth, no longer cause the faith of the just to mourn, and their innocence to tremble; then, their lot having nothing farther in common with that of the infidels and the hypocrites, the righteous will not be constrained to be witnesses of the crimes of the wicked, or ministers of their passions; then, all the bands of society, of authority, or of dependence, which attached them here below to the impious and the worldling, being dissolved, they will no longer say with the prophet: O Lord, why prolongest thou our exile and our abode here? our souls are dried up with sorrow at the sight of the crimes and the iniquity of which the earth is full. — Then will their tears be changed into joy, and their lamentations to thanksgiving; they will pass to the right like the sheep, and the left will be for the goats, for the wicked.

“The world being thus arranged, all the nations of the earth thus separated, each motionless on the spot which shall have been allotted to them; surprise, terror, despair, confusion, painted in the face of the one; in that of the other, joy, serenity, confidence; the eyes of the righteous uplifted towards the Son of Man, from whom they expect their deliverance; those of the wicked, fixed in a frightful manner upon the ground, and almost piercing the abysses with their looks, as if to mark already the place that is destined for them: the King of Glory, says the Gospel, placed between the two masses, will advance, and turning towards those on his right, he shall say, with a look full of benignity and majesty, capable of itself to console them for all their past afflictions: ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . The wicked have ever considered you as the refuse, the most useless part of the world; let them now learn that the world subsisted for your sake only, that all things were made for you, and that the end of all things is come now, that your number is completed. Leave at length that earth where ye have ever been but strangers and travellers; follow me in the ways of my glory and my felicity, as ye have followed me in those of my humiliations and my sufferings. Your toils have lasted but for a moment; the happiness which ye are about to enjoy shall never end.’

“Then, turning to the left, with wrath in his eyes, darting hither and thither looks terrible as avenging lightnings on the multitude of the wicked, with a voice, says the prophet, which shall rend asunder the bowels of

the abyss to swallow them up, he will say : ‘ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ! Ye were the elect of the world, ye are the accursed of my Father. Your pleasures have been rapid and transient ; your torments shall be eternal.’

“ Then will the righteous, caught up into the air with the Son of Man, begin to sing this heavenly song : Thou art rich in mercy, O Lord, and thou hast crowned thy gifts ! Then will the wicked curse the author of their being, and the fatal day which gave them birth ; or rather they will be filled with fury against themselves, as the authors of their own misery and ruin : the abysses will open, the skies will descend. The wicked, says the Gospel, shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous to life eternal.”

At this place, my friend, the book dropped from my hand ; my agitated spirit was no longer master of itself : I heard the awful trump ; the graves around me opened before my face ; I saw phantoms, confused shapes, issuing from them. My blood curdled in my veins. I felt ready to faint at the thought of that abode of happiness to which the righteous were about to be called, of that place of horror into which the wicked would be hurled. Covering my face with both hands, I exclaimed, in consternation : O, my soul, what shall be thy lot ?

The brook Cedron, I have already told you, runs through the valley of Jehoshaphat ; it is about twenty paces from the garden of Gethsemane. David crossed it when pursued by Absalom : it is most celebrated on account of our Lord’s passion. Several writers have asserted that at certain times its water is of a reddish colour ; I can

affirm that such is not the fact. Never was there so wet a year as this: for six successive days the rain fell in torrents; nevertheless, I have always found the brook so dry, that I should scarcely have been able to wash my hands in it. I have been assured that in several places the water has been turned off for the purpose of being conducted into reservoirs.

The Church of the Virgin Mary, opposite to the garden of Gethsemane, and by the side of the grotto of the Agony, is itself an immense grotto, a work of extraordinary labour, inasmuch as it has been hewn out of the rock: it is indisputably one of the most considerable works executed by the inhabitants of Palestine and Asia Minor. You descend to it by a magnificent flight of steps, fifteen feet wide; these steps, fifty in number, are of marble. At bottom is the tomb of the Virgin, in a small chapel, where a great quantity of silver and golden lamps are kept burning, night and day. A dome rises above the altar, at which mass is performed.

Nearly in the middle, on the left, is the tomb of Joseph; on the right, are those of Joachim and Anna.

This church belonged formerly to the Latins; it is now the joint property of the Greeks and the Armenians; and M. de Chateaubriand is mistaken when he says that the Catholics "are in possession of Mary's tomb."

About a hundred paces from this tomb, and not far from Gethsemane, is the spot where, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the traditions on this subject, the Christians of the East maintain that the wonders of the Assumption of the mother of Jesus took place.

From this spot you begin to ascend the Mount of

Olives, which is very steep. Nothing can exceed the surprise which you feel when, having reached mid-way, on turning about you perceive Jerusalem before you. It no longer appears to be that ruined city, whose filthy, narrow, and crooked streets make such a profound and disagreeable impression upon strangers. The tower of David; the cupolas of the church of the Holy Sepulchre; the mosque of Omar, built in the centre of the space, where of old stood the temple of Solomon; the houses which surround it; that multitude of minarets; the convents of St. Saviour, of the Greeks, and of the Armenians; those embattled walls that encompass the city; the Gilded Gate; the gate of St. Stephen; those forsaken churches, the ruins of which distance prevents the eye from discerning—all these impart to the holy city an aspect of grandeur and magnificence which strike the pilgrim and long rivet his gaze.

From the summit of the mount, directing your steps to the left, you pass through a field of olives, and then arrive at considerable remains of buildings known by the name of *Viri Galilæi*. As these are the first words addressed by the angels to the disciples who witnessed the ascension of our Saviour, when they asked them, “why stand ye gazing up into heaven?” (Acts, i. 9) several have conjectured that this was the spot where Mary, the Apostles, and the one hundred and twenty disciples, beheld our Lord ascend to heaven. Others assert that the appellation given to these remains is derived from the circumstance that, before the time of Jesus Christ, they were the resort of the Galileans who came to Jerusalem to hold the Passover. What gives

some probability to the latter opinion is, the considerable distance of this point from the place of the ascension. It is at least three hundred paces.

The first time that I explored the Mount of Olives, on proceeding eastward amidst Turkish sepulchres, I perceived all at once the Dead Sea, the plain of Jericho, the Jordan, and beyond it the mountains of Arabia Petræa. Though nearly seven leagues distant, that plain, studded here and there with verdure, that sea, that river, appeared to be at my feet.

What a view ! what recollections it awakened in my mind ! how impatient it made me to see those objects nearer ! But then, again, how much stronger became my fears that I should not be able to accomplish this purpose ! I could not take my eyes from the scene before me : I could distinctly discern the Jordan, though it flows in a very deep bed : several fires were burning on the resinous shores of the Dead Sea.

The weather was fine ; I felt well : for a long time I had not been so happy. I passed several hours, with the telescope in my hand, on the summit of the hill ; and I can declare that I shall reckon them among the most agreeable of my life.

Going back, as if to return to Jerusalem, but still on the summit of the hill, you come to a mosque, on the site of which formerly stood a most magnificent church, erected by St. Helena, on the very spot where Christ ascended to heaven after his resurrection. This mosque, which threatens to fall to ruin, is surrounded by wretched houses inhabited by Turks.

In the centre, in a kind of chapel, is to be seen the print

left in the rock by the left foot of our Saviour, at the moment of rising from the earth and ascending to heaven. It is asserted that formerly the print of the right foot also was to be seen there, but that the Turks removed and buried it, for the purpose of conveying it afterwards to the mosque of the Temple. The very scanty information that I obtained does not permit me to say any thing positive on this subject.

As for the print of the left foot, it is so distinct as to leave no doubt of its existence, though it is somewhat worn by the innumerable kisses which the pilgrims have for so many ages been in the habit of giving it, and perhaps also by some petty thefts which strict vigilance has not always been able to prevent.

This part of the rock, now enclosed with masonry, is committed to the custody of a santan, a kind of Turkish monk, who is enjoined to oppose the commission of the slightest injury. This santan is provided with small square stones, with which he touches the foot-mark of our Lord, and which he then offers to the pilgrims, who give him a trifle in exchange.

To judge from the direction of the foot, our Saviour, when he ascended to heaven, must have had his face turned towards the north.

The Catholics, the Greeks, and the Armenians, having previously purified this mosque, hold mass in it on Ascension-day.

Descending the Mount of Olives on the opposite side to that on which I went up, you come, at the distance of eighty paces from the mosque, to an ancient chapel, where Jesus taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer; that

admirable prayer which authorises the Christian, imbued by the salutary precepts, and formed by the instruction of his Saviour himself, to venture to give to God the fond name of father; to consider himself as his child; and to solicit with confidence of his omnipotent paternity those favours and blessings which can alone impart the portion of happiness that man is permitted to enjoy on earth, and ensure to him the immense and everlasting felicity of the life to come.

Farther on are the ruins of a kind of reservoir, remarkable for twelve arcades or vaulted niches, beneath which one person only can enter at a time. Here it was, according to tradition, that the apostles, before they separated, composed together that symbol by which the believers were to recognize one another. On reflecting that the twelve poor fishermen, with whom this symbol originated, had met in this place, perhaps on the very spot where I stood; that there, as in their first temple, they had begun solitarily to recite that creed which now resounds in all the temples in the world — I sank upon my knees before the humble ruins which I beheld. “I believe in God,” I exclaimed, and, in the effusion of my soul, I continued to recite the apostolic profession of faith.

I shall not tell you, my dear Charles, what absolutely new feelings were excited in me, by the words of that august symbol, as they escaped from my lips or rather from my heart: never had I uttered them with such deep emotion. But I must communicate to you some of the thoughts which thronged into my mind, and the meditation on which completely engrossed me for some time. To me that creed was a magnificent and ineffable

marvel — that creed, the work of a few ignorant and unlettered men — that creed, which, issuing from a corner of Judea, spread throughout the whole world, and became the symbol not only of nations, but likewise of all the truly great and still more of all the really virtuous men who have since existed, imparting to the most timid courage and strength to defy persecution and death, and every where triumphing over tyrants as well as philosophers, over sophistries as well as scaffolds. But what produced in me a much more lively impression, because the thought had not yet occurred to me, was that here, on this spot, the creed no longer appeared to me vaguely as containing a mere profession of religious faith, but as comprehending also a real deposition of witnesses attesting the certainty of the facts on which the whole doctrine of salvation rests. I considered that, by a particular arrangement of Providence, this testimony was constant, perpetual, fixed, amidst nations all the generations of which are hurried by a rapid movement to the grave ; and I admired with a sort of extacy the light which infinite wisdom has been pleased to shed around its works, that the truth may appear more striking to the well disposed, and that its brightness may disconcert the wicked. Most assuredly, in order to prove the facts of the gospel history, it ought to suffice that they had been publicly attested on the very spots where they took place, that they had been confirmed by witnesses in presence of the chiefs of the people and the magistrates, and sealed by them with their blood. What would become of the certainty of numberless facts, which no one doubts, if those who saw them, who have related them,

could not have gained credit for them but by the sacrifice of their lives ! Even this, however, was not enough in the merciful designs of the divine wisdom : it determined not only that the facts of the birth, passion, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of our Saviour should be recorded in the creed, but that this testimony of the Apostles should be reinforced by the testimony of all the contemporary Christians ; and that, expressed by the same symbol, it should be repeated from age to age, by all those who should become members of the church of Christ : that at all times and in all places, in persecution as in the lap of peace, in private meetings as in public, in the bosom of families as in the temples, it should not cease for a day to be proclaimed : so that, from the united voices of the whole Christian world, there should result but one single and only testimony, connected, if I may be allowed the expression, by the first link with the very facts to which it relates ; and by the last, with that glorious and triumphant cross, with which, on the awful day, Jesus shall again appear upon earth, to judge both those who have believed and those who shall have refused to believe.

A hundred paces from the spot which suggested these grave reflexions, you come to some grottoes, called, I know not why, the Tombs of the Prophets. Near these, on a rapid and stony descent, which continues to the foot of the Mount of Olives, you see the remains of some buildings near a rock called the Rock of the Prediction, because it was here that Jesus, surveying Jerusalem, wept over it, saying :—

“ If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy

day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation."

Words which, according to my custom, I read on the spot, and kneeling.

History has remarked that, by a peculiar permission of Providence, at the time of the siege of the guilty city, the tent of Titus was pitched on the precise spot where the Lord had foretold the destruction of Jerusalem.

LETTER XXV.

CHANGEABLE TEMPERATURE AT JERUSALEM—ASPECT OF THAT CITY DURING AND AFTER LENT—ACELDAMA, OR FIELD OF BLOOD—VALLEY OF GEHENNON—TOMBS HEWN OUT OF THE ROCK—WELL OF NEHEMIAH—FOUNTAIN OF SILOA—VILLAGE OF SILOA—MOUNT OF OFFENCE—TOMB OF ABSALOM—TOMB OF BARRACHIAS—TOMB OF ZECHARIAH—TOMB OF JEHOSHAPHAT—TOMBS OF THE KINGS—TOMBS OF THE JUDGES.

Jerusalem, February 27th, 1832.

I prosecute my excursions with ardour, my dear friend, and, thanks be to God, notwithstanding my fatigues, notwithstanding the fickleness of the weather, which, on the same day, is at one time scorching, at another very wet, and at another extremely cold, I am very well, with the exception of some slight in-
con-

veniences. Never, indeed, have I known such a climate as this : it has happened that in the morning the heat has been suffocating, and at night snow has fallen in considerable quantity. At Jerusalem, every thing bears the mark of the curse with which that hapless city has been stricken. All there is extraordinary, all is dull ; the sports of the boys in the streets are frequently noisy ; you hear at times loud cries, but mirth appears to be banished from among them.

In the course of the year, Jerusalem presents itself under two very different aspects. He who should see that city only, during Lent, certainly could not form any correct idea of it. Then, ten thousand pilgrims, Greeks, Armenians, Russians, Syrians, Copts, throng thither, and give it for some time the appearance of a city full of life and bustle. At this period, however, it is but a dressed-up corpse, the features of which are covered by a deceitful mask, and which, when stripped, shows only the sad reality—death and its hideous ravages. The few shops that are open during Lent are afterwards shut up, at least most of them ; the streets are again deserted, or, if you see a few persons in them, it is on the terraces, upon which they come half naked, to rid themselves in the sunshine of the vermin which they cannot entirely destroy. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, you see outside the gates a few Turkish, Jewish, or Christian inhabitants, walking about, the men apart from the women, who are veiled from head to foot. It is in general to the cemeteries that they bend their steps. The husband, as he passes his wife, affects not to notice her ; and the wife does the same in regard to

the child, which an unhappy slave carries carelessly behind her.

The day before yesterday, it was scarcely light when I was already at the Jaffa gate. I intended to visit the Aceldama, or field of blood, the well of Nehemiah, the fountain of Siloa, and the tombs of Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and Zachariah. Accompanied by my dragoman, on quitting the city, I took the road on the left; I passed close to a very large pool, now dry, which bears the character of high antiquity. It is known by the name of Bathsheba's pool.

After half an hour's walk, I reached the Potter's field, bought by the priests with the thirty pieces of silver which Judas had carried back to them, and which they would not put into the treasury again, because it was the price of blood. It was appropriated to the burial of strangers. It is a common notion among the Jews that Judas was buried there.

This ground is long but narrow. St. Helena caused it to be inclosed by walls. The Armenians, who are in possession of it, sell to the pilgrims the right of being interred there. It serves also as a cemetery for the Caraites, a sect of Jews, who reject traditions and adhere exclusively to the letter of Scripture.

A circumstance worthy of notice, and which my dragoman pointed out to me, is that in this ground you find a great quantity of potsheards, or fragments of earthen vessels, indicating the profession of its ancient proprietor. I picked up several, in which may be discovered the impress of high antiquity.

On the left is the valley of Gehennon, or Behennon, the

accursed valley, where the impious kings who reigned for some time over Israel erected a temple to the god Moloch, to whom the people, having become idolaters, sacrificed children by placing them in the arms of his heated statue.

This valley is very deep. The wind, which blew with violence through the crevices and clefts in the rocks, reminded me of the shrieks of the infants consigned to the embrace of the burning idol.

On the right is an uninterrupted series of tombs cut out of the rock, the real origin of which it appears impossible to ascertain. Some writers date them back beyond our era; others conjecture that they existed in part at the time of Adrian, during the interval of peace which the Christians enjoyed under that emperor after the dispersion of the Jews. I went into several of these abodes of death; they are almost all alike. In some of them are to be seen remains of inscriptions in Hebrew and Greek, so mutilated that they cannot be read. Most of these tombs are a series of chambers containing a great quantity of oblong cells, destined for the sepulchres of the dead. The doorways are in general so low that you cannot enter them without creeping on all-fours, like the brute animals.

On sallying from one of these sepulchres, I was not a little surprised to find myself face to face with an ill-looking Turk, who, armed with a musket, asked me for a *bakschisch*, (a donation) with an insolent air. As I was unarmed and he supposed that I was alone, his insolence increased till he saw a turban popping out of the same hole from which I had crawled: it was that

of my dragoman. Notwithstanding the presence of Jacob, he insisted on having money, declaring that, the week before, an Englishman on a like occasion had given him a couple of crowns. I desired Jacob to tell him that this was a proof that the Englishman was richer than I was, and, in spite of his cries and importunities, I persisted in my refusal.

It is a lamentable thing that, in the environs of Jerusalem, as throughout all Palestine, a stranger cannot go abroad by himself without running the risk of being robbed or even murdered. The most interesting excursions are almost always disturbed by that kind of *qui vive* on which you are obliged to be when you go without attendants. On this point I have frequently committed imprudences, which might have cost me dear. It is to be hoped that, if the pacha keeps Palestine, the depredations of the Arabs will be repressed;* and that

* At the moment when this page is going to press, I learn that forty thousand Arabs have rushed upon unfortunate Jerusalem; that, for the nineteenth time, it has been taken and pillaged, and that the Jews have suffered most. The plunder and slaughter lasted six days, and the arrival of Ibrahim's army alone put an end to them. When, after the reflexions which conclude the twenty-second of these letters, after quoting the prophecy of Daniel relative to the curse pronounced upon the deicide city, I added: "I see but too plainly that the desolation continues;" I was far from supposing that a more terrible catastrophe than any thing that met my view was destined so soon to furnish a new proof of it. Here follow some particulars which I find in a letter recently published on the subject.

" Jerusalem, July 16th, 1834.

" My residence in this city, and particularly my excursions among the Arabs, had enabled me since my arrival to ascertain that the people are extremely dissatisfied with Ibrahim, and that they are more especially exasperated because the young men are taken away for the purpose of recruiting the army. I learned that an extensive conspiracy was on the point of breaking out, and that I should do well to leave Palestine. It

strangers will be able to travel with that safety which in general, every where attends them in Egypt.

Having proceeded a whole hour, sometimes along easy roads, bordered by lands, more or less cultivated; at others, having to climb tracks cut in the rocks, where you

was unfortunately too late; I was obliged to stay. No sooner had the pacha set out for Jaffa, than the revolution broke out. The garrisons of Herek and Solth were cut in pieces, and the Arabs of Samaria and Hebron marched to Jerusalem. The pacha had left but six hundred men in that city, and the assailants fell upon it to the number of forty thousand. A few pieces of cannon, placed upon the walls, would have been sufficient to keep off these hostile hordes, which had no other arms than lances and muskets; but the Arabs had discovered a subterranean passage which was not guarded; they made their entry at midnight, and the soldiers, after a vigorous resistance, were obliged to retire to the citadel. All the Christians fled to the different convents, where they found safety.

"For five or six days, the city was given up to pillage. It was an awful sight. The Jews were the chief sufferers: their houses were sacked, their women insulted, violated. The heart heaves at the recital of such horrible atrocities. The hope, no doubt, of obtaining great ransoms caused the convents to be spared. To crown all these misfortunes, a violent earthquake overthrew several houses and destroyed part of the wall adjoining to the mosque. At Bethlehem, the convent fell almost in ruins, and nearly all the inhabitants were buried beneath them. The shocks continued for ten days, but none of the shocks was so violent as the first. The pacha, on being apprized of this event, marched off in the utmost haste with five thousand men from Jaffa.

"It is but twelve hours' march from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and the pacha was three days and a half before he could come to our relief. More than thirty thousand Arab peasants had assembled on the heights, and, when the troops had entered the narrow ravines and defiles, the Arabs, availing themselves of the elevated position which they occupied, rolled down upon their heads prodigious masses of rock, and the passage was rendered impracticable for cavalry and artillery. The activity and courage of Ibrahim, nevertheless, triumphed over all obstacles, and he entered Jerusalem victorious. The sanguinary war which the pacha continues to wage with the Arabs does not admit of leaving the city. But, the first occasion that offers, mounting my dromedary, I will fly, swift as the wind, across the desert to Cairo or Alexandria, and proceed to Europe."

meet with a few sepulchral caverns; we arrived at the extremity of the valley which we had been skirting since we entered the Aceldama, and which adjoins that of Jehoshaphat. Thence proceeding to the right, we arrived at the well of Nehemiah. This well is so called, because Nehemiah, on his return from Babylon, there found the sacred fire which the priests had concealed in it by command of Jeremiah. It is very deep, and surrounded by the ruins of buildings which resemble the ruins of a mosque, and in which are reservoirs, whither the cattle repair to slake their thirst. Notwithstanding its great depth, sometimes, especially in rainy winters, it is so full as to run over; and this, according to the general notion, is a sign that the year will be productive. In such circumstances, the Bedouins never fail to come and demand donations from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who are themselves eager to go and see the water running through the valley. They wash their carpets and their garments in it. It is a sort of public festival, to which almost all repair, and which gives them the more pleasure because it very rarely occurs. It is the only time at which you perceive any joy amid these regions of death. And what is the object of this joy? — why, a paltry stream, which in a few days will be dry, and which is frequently but a deceitful token of fertility — a striking image of all the vain and transient joys of this world.

After my visit to the well of Nehemiah, I turned back to see the fountain of Siloa. By the way, my dragoman pointed out to me a very aged mulberry-tree, which marks the spot where the prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder. At the distance of two hundred paces is the fountain of

Siloe, to which Jesus sent the blind man, whom he had cured with a little clay.

“As Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth He spat upon the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay ; and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is, by interpretation, sent. He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing.” (John, ix. 1, 6, 7.)

This pool is lined with stone in front and at the entrance; you descend into it by about twenty steps, rudely cut in the rock. It is said to have formerly been highly decorated. The spring issues from a rock, and exhibits this peculiarity that its water has periodically an ebb and flow, the effect of which is alternately to accelerate and slacken the velocity with which it runs. All the Christians by whom it is visited wash their eyes in it, in memory of the miracle wrought by our Saviour.

Opposite is the village of Siloe, inhabited by Arabs notorious for ferocity. The women of the place go habitually to the fountain for their supply of water. Several of them were there at the moment when I went down to it. As soon as they saw my white dress, which was quite strange to them, they set up loud cries : seeing that it was impossible to get away without passing me, they screamed like maniacs. To no purpose my dragoman told them not to be afraid, that I was only a white pilgrim—they shrieked the louder. I was obliged to go up again, and to retire to some distance, to allow them to pass. Away they scampered as fast as they could, and I went down again to the fountain.

Jacob had taken care to bring a bottle : I filled it, carried it home to my cell, and, at night, seated at a crazy table, upon which figured nothing save a small loaf of wheat grown in the Holy Land, and a bottle of water from Siloa, I made a more delicious meal than any of which I ever partook in gilded apartments, or at the table of kings.

On leaving the fountain of Siloa, I again passed through the valley of Jehoshaphat, leaving behind me Mount Moriah and the site of Solomon's temple, and I soon found myself at the foot of the Mount of Offence, before the tomb of Absalom. It is a quadrangular monument, formed of a single block of stone, about eight or ten feet square. It is adorned with twenty-four columns of the Doric order, equally distributed on each side. Above rises a sort of pyramid, which appeared to me not to belong to the same block, and the height of which is not in proportion with the tomb.

On one side is seen a kind of sepulchre, where, according to a very ancient tradition, the Christians of the East believe that the apostle James secreted himself when Jesus was apprehended, protesting that he would not leave it till he had witnessed the accomplishment of the prophecies and the resurrection of our Saviour. Some conjecture that it is the tomb of Barachias, who was killed between the porch and the altar. This monument, raised above twenty feet above the road, is adorned with four pillars of very good effect.

The tomb of Zachariah, which is seen close at hand, is of one single block, like that of Absalom. A little farther on is a sort of square room, hewn out of the rock, and

the doorway of which is in a remarkable style. This is the tomb of Jehoshaphat. Almost buried already under the mould and rubbish which are daily rolling down upon it, this tomb will soon be entirely lost. The labour of a few workmen for some hours would be sufficient to clear it; but such is the stupidity of the government, that, if I had solicited permission to remove the earth at my own expence, I could not have obtained it.

What treasures must be buried beneath rubbish, under a soil which you dare neither dig into nor stir, for fear of exposing yourself to persecutions, to oppressions, to enormous extortions! No part of the world has perhaps so many valuable objects buried under its ruins as Jerusalem and its environs. Every shower that washes down a little mould in general lays bare medals or rare coins, almost all of which fall into the hands of the Arabs. When the rain is over, they are seen hastening from Siloa to Mount Moriah, and skirting the sides of the hill, to pick them up. They carry them to the Jews, who buy them for a trifle, and afterwards make the pilgrims pay dearly for them.

The medals of Constantine, and particularly of St. Helena, are in great request with the Greeks; I have myself found several of them. One day, I met a Turk, who had in his hand a small bronze statue, about six inches high, representing a warrior clothed in mail, brandishing a club over his head. This figure, which, no doubt, he had just found, seemed to me to come from a tomb. I signified a desire to have it, and he disposed of it at a very cheap rate.

Soon afterwards, having learned that the braziers

bought antiquities of this kind by weight, and trafficked with them, I went with my dragoman to the one whom he pointed out to me as doing most business, and begged him to bring me whatever he had curious and rare. On the next day but one, the fellow came very mysteriously to bring me an old piece of copper, assuring me that it was a fragment of the ancient gilded gate leading to the Temple, through which our Lord passed on Palm-Sunday. He could not have told me any thing more false and absurd : I was not his dupe. The air of sincerity with which he talked to me disguised something more than cunning. This brazier was a Greek.

After the excursions of which I have just given you an account, I determined to visit the Tombs of the Kings and those of the Judges, and devoted yesterday to this purpose.

The Tombs of the Kings are about a quarter of a league from the holy city. On going out at the Damascus gate, after proceeding some distance along a stony road, whence the eye perceives here and there a few olive-trees planted in a rocky and sterile soil, you descend by a rapid slope into a kind of nearly square court, the sides of which, hewn out of the rock, exhibit the appearance of four absolutely perpendicular walls, fourteen or fifteen feet high. On one of the sides is a high doorway, above which ornaments in relievo represent palm-trees with their foliage, grapes and other fruit.

On the left, at the farther end, is a corridor, now so choked up that you cannot get into it without crawling on all-fours. At the extremity of this passage is a very sloping path, which leads to a room, hewn out of the rock

itself. In the walls are niches, six feet long and three wide, destined to hold coffins. This room communicates by three doors with seven others, likewise hollowed out of the rock for the same purpose. The coffins which they contained were of stone, and adorned with arabesques. Some others exist entire, and there are the relics of a few more. The doors of these abodes of death are constructed of the same stone, as well as the hinges. I observed but one that was not broken; of the others nothing is left but scattered fragments.

It is not easy to assign precisely the period to which these tombs belong; at any rate, notwithstanding the name that is given them by popular tradition, it is evident that they could not have served for the burial-place of the kings of Judah, since, according to the Bible, those princes were interred in Jerusalem or on Mount Sion. Besides, a glance at these monuments is sufficient to convince us that they are of a less ancient date. Several travellers, on the authority of a passage in Josephus, have concluded that they were constructed by command of Helena, queen of Adiabene, and that this princess was interred in them. Some, grounding their opinion on another passage in Josephus, have conjectured that they were the work of Herod, the tetrarch, who had them hewn for himself and his family. A simple pilgrim, I leave the learned to clear up and resolve the doubts to which the diversity of opinions on this subject has given rise.

Some months ago, a foreigner conceived the design of removing the finest of the coffins from these sepulchral chambers, and conveying it to Jaffa, to be there em-

barked for Alexandria. The enterprise was the more difficult, inasmuch as it was necessary to communicate the secret to several persons. However, by dint of money and perseverance, he succeeded in abstracting the coffin from the place where it had lain for so many ages; and he was already upon the road with his prize, borne on the backs of camels, when he received intelligence that the governor of Jerusalem, informed of the bold theft, had issued orders to stop the party. Soon afterwards, the sound of approaching horsemen actually proclaimed the danger which he was incurring; he had but just time to drop the sarcophagus, by cutting the ropes which bound it upon the camels, and to betake himself to flight under favour of the darkness. I have frequently seen and examined this beautiful coffin, in the middle of the road where it still lies, without any one daring to touch it. At the time of the coming of the Egyptians, I might perhaps have been able to obtain permission to remove and to send it to Europe; but Lent approached, and other thoughts engaged my mind. Besides, the person who had taken so much pains, and gone to such an expense to possess himself of it, might hope to succeed, by means of proper representations to Ibrahim, in executing his project, and it would have been mortifying to him to find himself anticipated by another.

This sarcophagus is of white marble, adorned with basso-relievos of great beauty, but not exhibiting any figure of men or animals; they represent nothing but foliage, vines, and flowers.

A quarter of a league from the Tombs of the Kings, are situated those of the Judges of Israel. They are of

the same kind as the preceding, but less magnificent. The entrance is surmounted by a triglyph, a considerable but tasteless work, placed in a spacious square hall, which serves as a communication to an infinity of chambers; in the walls of which are hewn various niches, one above another, all destined, like those already described, for the reception of coffins.

There is nothing to justify the appellation by which these tombs are known, and all that is circulated on this subject appears to me to be wholly destitute of foundation.

One thing to be remarked is, that the great number of these sepulchres, constructed in one spot, evidently shows that they were not the property of a single family. In going through them, one is never tired of admiring the magnitude of the work, and one is astonished that the mallet and the chisel could have sufficed for forming such excavations in the hardest rocks.

Adieu !

LETTER XXVI.

ABODE IN THE HOLY SEPULCHRE DURING THE THREE DAYS PRECEDING
ASH-WEDNESDAY.

Jerusalem, March 10th, 1832.

On the approach of Lent, I intended at first to shut myself up, during the whole time that it lasted, in the church of the Holy Sepulchre ; but I should have been obliged to suspend my excursions about Jerusalem, at the risk of not being able to resume them afterwards ; I should have been obliged to do too much violence to the

most favourite of the habits which I have here contracted, that of regularly visiting the places which call to my remembrance the most painful circumstances of my Saviour's passion. I had, besides, a motive which, though of secondary interest, was not without importance in my estimation. Several Arab workmen are at this moment engaged in making for me various objects of piety that I wish to carry with me to Europe ; objects whose value is daily rising, in proportion as the concourse of pilgrims of different nations increases, and as the orders from Spain, Portugal, and Italy, are becoming more numerous. I was anxious to watch the work, to hasten it, to see that it was properly executed, and that it experienced no interruption. These considerations decided me to change the plan which I had formed. I shall visit the Holy Sepulchre every day that it shall be open in Lent ; but I shall not shut myself up in it till the last fortnight, and I shall leave it at Easter. I have determined at any rate to pass there, in absolute seclusion, the last days of that season which the world calls the Carnival ; that is to say, the three days preceding Ash-Wednesday ; and I shall therefore go in on Saturday.

In these days of riot, when worldlings seem to know no other temples than assembly-rooms and theatres, to have no other deities than pleasure and licentiousness, I felt a powerful impulse to ascend Calvary ; to make penitential atonement for the vices of sinners, and particularly for the part which formerly I had, alas ! myself the misfortune to take in these criminal gratifications. It was for me a precious occasion for testifying my regret, my repentance, and for deriving from deep meditation those

sentiments which I owe to the infinite mercy that has snatched me from the abyss. Oh ! how delightful, my dear friend, how delightful have been the moments that I have passed at the tomb of my Saviour ! How delightful in particular have been the hours of night and silence ! how different from those when, intoxicated by an insensate joy, amidst dancing and festivity, the worldlings, forgetful of their salvation, forgetful of Him who has redeemed them, sacrifice their rest, destroy their health, and ruin their souls !

Kneeling, prostrate, on the stone where lay the sacred body of Jesus, I called to mind all that this Saviour, so tender, so merciful, so kind, so generous, had done for me ; I followed him in thought through all the moments of that life of poverty, toil, and suffering, to which he doomed himself, from his birth in the humble manger, in which I had lately worshipped him, to that cross on which he was pleased to consummate his sacrifice of atonement for our sins, to that sepulchre in which he remained three days under the empire of death. Never had I so clearly perceived, so strongly felt, that excessive love with which he loved the world, and that excessive ingratitude with which the world rejected him ; and from the bottom of my soul I implored pardon for that ungrateful world, and for myself, who have participated in its aberrations.

One thought in particular engaged my mind. Alone, in the silence of night, in presence of that tomb, I felt happy, happy from a kind of happiness that no other expression can render. The love of Jesus for me spoke not less strongly to my heart than if the sepulchre,

opening of itself, had shown him to me in the state to which he had been reduced by the torments and death over which he has triumphed. I beheld that sacred head, that brow, torn by the thorns, that blood-stained hair, those pierced hands what do I say? I beheld him living, victorious; I felt myself clasped, as it were, in his arms; I felt with rapture how benevolent he is to those who are willing to serve him, who are willing to be entirely his; and at the same time an inward voice called to me: What hast thou done to deserve the favour of being this day separated from the wretched creatures, who, at the moment when such pure felicity floods thy heart, are indulging in vain pleasures, in false joys, and demanding from them certain transient gratifications, which must terminate in remorse, lassitude, disgust? . . . And, in the transports of a gratitude which farther heightened the sense of my unworthiness, I could not be sufficiently thankful to Heaven for having granted to the repentance of a sinner a boon that would have been the worthy reward of a saint.

LETTER XXVII.

SITE OF THE ANCIENT TEMPLE ERECTED BY SOLOMON — MOSQUE OF OMAR.

Jerusalem, March 14th, 1832.

Last Wednesday, my dear friend, I quitted the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Before I went into it, I had desired my dragoman to seek out a place where it would be easy for me to examine closely the site of the ancient temple erected by Solomon. I had already taken occa-

sion to view it from Pilate's palace, now the residence of the governor; and still better, by the aid of a telescope, from the Mount of Olives, one of the most convenient points for examining it thoroughly. Still I was not satisfied: I wished to get closer to it, to seize not only its details, but to embrace in the same view, if possible, the surrounding buildings and the mosque of Omar, which likewise deserve the notice of travellers in the Holy Land. This was not an easy matter. A strict prohibition forbids Christians to enter it: any one caught in the mosque, or even in the place leading to it, would incur the penalty of death, which he would have no means of escaping but by an infamous apostacy. On this point, perhaps more than on any other, the Turks carry their fanaticism to the last extreme. The Sultan himself cannot grant permission, or, if he does, his Jerusalem subjects conceive that they have a right to pay no regard to it. It is related that a foreigner one day called upon the governor, and, firman in hand, applied to see the mosque. "Thy firman," said the governor, in a passion, "purports that thou shalt be admitted into the mosque; thou mayest go in; but, take notice, that it says nothing about letting thee come out again." The foreigner deemed it prudent to relinquish his intention. Sir Sidney Smith, who, by the defence of Acre, had gained high consideration throughout the whole country, took some steps with the same view, but all to no purpose. It is said, however, that two or three Christians have succeeded by means of a disguise in eluding Musulman vigilance, as I shall presently have occasion to relate to you.

My dragoman was not long before he informed me that my commission was executed. He had spoken to a Turk, whose house was nearer to the mosque than any of the surrounding buildings; its windows overlooked the place itself, and he had obtained permission for me, in my pretended quality of physician, to go and gratify my curiosity behind the blinds of one of his apartments.

I went thither at ten in the morning. The Turk, having made his women withdraw, ushered me into the room with a sort of mystery. The house, though in a slovenly state, appeared handsome. It needed some repairs which time had rendered necessary, but which, as far as I could perceive, were never thought of. The Turks—I am frequently obliged to repeat it—are fond of ruins. A broken column, pilasters cloven or that have tumbled down, are never without some charm for them. This house had originally belonged to the Templars, who had possessed on the same spot several others that were still handsomer.

After the first compliments, I went towards the window to make my observations. The Turk did not lose sight of me for a moment; he kept constantly beside me and my dragoman, and, whenever he saw any of his people crossing the place, he warned me to step aside. Once, in particular, when he was particularly urgent for me to step back, he exclaimed, in a tone of alarm: “There is the Capidgi-verde! I am afraid that he has seen you!” Notwithstanding the air of sincerity with which he expressed his apprehensions, I shrewdly suspected that it was but a clever trick to make me think more highly of the complaisance which he showed me;

I had not passed the prescribed bounds, and I do not think that he ran the least risk of being punished, even if I had been discovered.

The platform on which the Temple was built was an area of six hundred square cubits, or about twenty-five thousand feet. Towards the city it is bordered by a series of buildings, among which are distinguished the governor's palace, formerly the palace of Pilate, and the house of the *cadi*, once that of the patriarch. On the opposite side, it is bounded by the ramparts, which it overlooks, and beyond which the view extends over the valleys of Siloa and Jehoshaphat. In the centre stands the mosque of Omar; at the farther extremity is another mosque, of a reddish colour and much smaller. It was formerly a church, by the name of the Mother of God. It was built on part of the site of the Temple, where, it is said, the Virgin passed ten years of her life.

There is not a spot on the face of the earth that calls forth recollections so grand, so august, as that which was before my eyes. Here stood the richest, the most magnificent temple that ever man reared to the glory of the Most High. Solomon laid its foundations in the year of the world, 2992, finished it in the year 3000, and solemnly dedicated it in the following year. The first book of Kings, the second of Chronicles, Ezekiel, and Josephus the historian, will give you particulars concerning the construction and the riches of this edifice, which I cannot introduce here on account of their length.

In the year of the world, 3416, this famous temple was plundered and consigned to the flames by Nabu-

zardan, commander of the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria : nothing was left of it but ashes.

Fifty-two years afterwards, Zerubbabel and Joshua, or Jesus, son of Josedech, high-priest of the Jews, obtained permission from Cyrus to rebuild it on the same spot, and they immediately commenced the work : but their operations had afterwards to encounter numerous obstacles, either on the part of the prince by whom they had at first been favoured, or from his successor, so that they could not be finished till the year 3488, the sixth of the reign of Darius, when the dedication took place. Though prodigious sums had been expended in the rebuilding, and all resources had been exhausted in the embellishments, the aged men, who recollected the old edifice and compared it with the new one, could never cease deploring its destruction.

In the year of the world, 3988, Herod the Great proposed to the Jews to demolish the then existing temple, and promised to build another, surpassing in extent and magnificence that of Solomon, the constant object of the regret of the nation. The people, surprised, at first showed some reluctance to consent, fearing lest they should be without temple and without altar ; but Herod pacified them by declaring that he would not pull down the edifice where they assembled to worship the Lord, till all the materials requisite for the execution of his plan should be provided. He commenced the work in the following year, and devoted to it immense treasures. Ten thousand labourers were employed in cutting rocks, filling precipices, or erecting the buildings. The work was finished about the middle of the tenth year ; the

dedication took place in the year 3996, on the anniversary of the accession of that prince to the throne. It subsisted only seventy-seven years.

This was the Temple, the destruction of which was foretold by Christ; and, concerning which, Titus said to the deputies of the nations which sent him congratulations and crowns: "I am but an instrument of divine vengeance."

In 638, Jerusalem, after sustaining a siege of two years, was forced to offer to capitulate. Omar granted it terms; then, affecting sentiments of the deepest devotion, he entered the city clad in a coarse garment of camel's hair, proceeded to the court of Solomon's temple, caused the filth to be cleared away from it by his soldiers, to whom he himself set the example, and publicly promised to build a mosque there for those of his own faith.

In a few years the work was completed: the mosque was called Gament-al-Sakra, from the name of the rock, where, it was asserted, God had spoken to Jacob. At the time when the city was taken by the crusaders, a great number of Mussulmans sought refuge there. Most of them were slaughtered, either within or without this temple, which was afterwards converted into a church, and used for the catholic worship, till the period of Saladin's triumphs over the Christians.

The mosque of Omar is built upon a platform, raised about six feet above the level of the place; it is a quadrangle, each side of which is about two hundred paces in length. At each of the four cardinal points there is a flight of eight marble steps, by which you ascend to it.

The building is an octagon, surmounted by a dome, above which is a lantern of the same form, adorned with stained glass of different colours. The walls, lined with small squares of marble or painted porcelain, exhibit a sort of mosaic work, bordered by foliage of whimsical design, in which are framed, as it were, the most remarkable passages of the Koran, inscribed in letters of gold.

Close to it is the reservoir at which the Turks perform their ablutions before they go to prayers.

Owing to the distance at which the observer is placed, even in the position which I occupied, the proportions of the building cannot be calculated with any precision. If we may rely on the writers who appear to have been best informed on the subject, it is about two hundred and fifty-six feet in circumference and one hundred and twenty in height.

My Turk assured me, with the greatest seriousness, that within it is to be seen a stone of enormous size, suspended in the air, and upheld in it as by a miracle. My dragoman, who is neither a dolt nor over-credulous, affirmed the same thing; and, what is still more extraordinary, a Catholic mason, who had accompanied us, told me the same story. All three pitied my unbelief, and were vexed to hear me treat their account as a silly story. The mason passes in Jerusalem for an excellent man. Twenty times have I questioned him concerning this prodigy, and twenty times he has repeated his first assertion. He insists that he is more certain of the truth of what he states, because he has been employed for some months in the repair of the interior: "and

I had plenty of time," he gravely adds, "to look at and to examine this stone, which is of a green colour."

I afterwards questioned several persons of Jerusalem, who seemed to me not deficient in sense. What was my surprise to find them offended at my obstinate unbelief! If there can be any truth in the story, which I still cannot help thinking evidently fabulous, the stone in question is no doubt actually to be seen at the top of the mosque, where it has been so skilfully fixed, that the observer who looks at it from below is the dupe of an illusion, and persuades himself that it touches nothing.

Few travellers, probably, have visited Jerusalem without feeling a strong desire to enter this mosque and to convince themselves with their own eyes of the truth or falsehood of all that is related concerning it. In general they have been withheld, some by apprehension of the personal danger which they should incur, others by the fear of compromising those from whom they were receiving hospitality, or even all the Catholics dwelling in Jerusalem. Mention is nevertheless made of several persons, who, disguised as Arabs, found means to gratify their curiosity: among others are mentioned a Spaniard, Don Domingo Badia y Leblich, who travelled under the name of Ali Bey el Abassi, and Burckhardt, who assumed the appellation of Sheik Ibrahim: both passed for Mahometans, and both spoke Arabic so fluently that they might well be mistaken for natives of the country.

In 1818, Madame Belzoni successfully employed the same stratagem. In the dress of a Turkish woman, she penetrated without obstacle into the mosque. She there

saw a great number of pillars, mostly of granite, the capitals of which appeared to be of coarse workmanship, like all the works of Mahometan architecture. Having entered a kind of closet, lighted by a large window, she there found a Catholic mason, who told her that this was the place where the aged Simeon and Anna, holding in their arms the infant Jesus, had prophesied. The mason afterwards pointed out to her an aperture in the wall, looking towards Siloa, and assured her that originally there was a door there by which Christ entered the Temple. He would have shown her many other things not less interesting, and which he regarded as sacred; but the lady, not understanding Arabic, and very little of Italian, so that she could scarcely comprehend what he said to her; tormented, moreover, by the very reasonable apprehension of being surprised in such a place, thanked him, and hastened out of it.

Before we retired, my dragoman made me remark around the Place, and particularly at the points nearest to us, fragments of porticoes, columns, and arcades, from which numerous lamps were suspended; and he pointed out one as being the very site of "the gate of the Temple which is called Beautiful," where sat the beggar, lame from his birth, whom the apostle Peter cured in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

My Turk was more anxious to relate to me Mussulman traditions. "Do you see," said he, pointing to a kind of chapel on the right, "do you see that little building?—it contains a stone, which is there by a miracle." According to him, this stone was formerly carried away by the Greeks, but, no sooner was it out of

Jerusalem, than it had the complaisance to return of itself to the place which it now occupies. Then directing my attention to another edifice, backed against a wall, which bounds the Place towards the valley of Jehoshaphat, "It was there," said he, "on that very spot, that the great Solomon used to sit when superintending the works of the Temple." He would have told me many other fine things, could I but have shown ever so little patience and discretion. I thanked him for his civility and retired, admiring in him a politeness to which the Turks had not yet accustomed me.

LETTER XXVIII.

EXCURSION TO ST. SABA — CAMP OF BEDOUINS; DEARTH PREVAILING IN IT — VIEW OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. SABA — GREEK MONKS — APARTMENTS — DINNER — SUPERB PALM-TREE — PILGRIMS — NIGHT PASSED AT ST. SABA — BROOK CEDRON — THE PILGRIMS LAID UNDER CONTRIBUTION BY THE ARABS.

Jerusalem, March 17th, 1832.

I was only waiting, my dear friend, for a favourable occasion to visit the monastery of St. Saba; such a one occurred last week, and I hastened to avail myself of it. As the roads are unsafe, and it would have been the height of imprudence to venture thither otherwise than in caravan, I requested the prior of the monastery, who habitually resides here, to have the goodness to inform me when one should be going. This monk, whose manners are most cordial, and who speaks Italian tolerably, desired me the very next day to hold myself in readiness for the 15th. On the day mentioned, at eight in the morning, I went to him, and we set out with a few Arabs.

He had taken care to send on before us the Greek pilgrims, about a hundred in number, accompanied by a janissary, with orders to wait for us at the well of Nehemiah.

On reaching the foot of Mount Sion, opposite to the Aceldama, we saw a messenger advancing towards us in breathless haste : he accosted the prior and delivered a letter to him. The prior opened the despatch, and had scarcely read a few lines before he turned pale with pain and surprise. At first, he said nothing about its contents ; and I, for my part, thought it right to respect his silence. But presently the words, *banditti*, robbers, escaped almost involuntarily from his lips ; then raising his hand to his forehead, "It is incredible !" said he, talking to himself ; "it is incredible !—what !—in spite of three iron doors !—The robbers ! the robbers !" I deemed myself sufficiently authorized by this soliloquy to inquire the cause of his affliction. "Alas !" he replied, heaving a deep sigh, "alas ! the monastery to which we are going has just been plundered by the Arabs. Instead of attacking the three iron doors, which defend the entrance, and behind which we fancied ourselves safe, they have made a hole in the wall, penetrated into the interior, carried off all the provisions, and ill-used our brethren before they withdrew. What adds to my grief, and renders it more bitter," continued he, "is the thought that, in a house so pillaged, it will be impossible for us to receive you so well as you deserve. I have given orders that at least the most necessary articles be brought to us with all speed from Jerusalem." — I assured the good prior that, a monk like himself, and belonging to a very

rigid order, I was accustomed to privations, and that my only grief was the cruel trial which himself and his community had to suffer.

We soon overtook our pilgrims, some on horseback, others on foot, but collected close together, and ready to defend themselves in case of attack. We pursued our route along with them, proceeding between hills without trees, without shade, without verdure, the dreary aspect of which prepared us for that of St. Saba, still more dreary.

Two leagues from Jerusalem, we came to a camp of Bedouins, and a league farther to another. The first consisted of fifteen tents, the second of about twenty, all of a black stuff woven from camel's hair. The men appeared extremely spare, but well made, and so tanned that we might have taken them for Ethiopians. Camels, goats, asses, dogs, women, children, were all huddled together : on our approach the men rose, the women covered themselves, the children began to cry, and the dogs to bark ; our unexpected presence, and especially our number, had filled them with real alarm.

A few paces from the camp, I perceived some poor women, hard at work, digging up roots. "It is for the purpose of feeding upon them," said the good prior ; "the famine which at this moment afflicts the country reduces them to this extremity. The convent exhausts itself in relieving them ; it is making enormous sacrifices ; every other day it gives at least a small loaf to each man, and never sends away a creature that comes without some donation ; and yet," added he, "the scoundrels ! they make holes in the walls to get in and plunder us ! — the wretches ! . . . And we have three iron doors, reverend

father, three iron doors, and yet are not safe ! . . . Before that cursed siege of Acre they durst not have done so. Now they dare do any thing ; nobody punishes them !”

About a league and a half beyond the second camp of the Bedouins, we suddenly descried before us the points of two lofty towers apparently shooting out of the abyss : they were those of St. Saba. I do not think it possible for recluses to settle on a more arid, a more frightfully desert spot, than this. There is no exaggeration in the most repulsive pictures that travellers have drawn to portray its horror. Nowhere is any thing to be seen but dust and rocks ; and it is on the steep and almost perpendicular side of these rocks, four hundred feet above the level of the brook Cedron, the bed of which is discovered at the bottom of the ravine, that the first terrace, or rather, if I may be allowed the expression, the basement of the monastery is constructed. The rest of the buildings, backed against the hill, rise in the rear, stage above stage, to the topmost, the base of the part of the building which overlooks all the rest, and which is itself overlooked by the towers, whose summits first met our view.

On the opposite side, at a depth that affrights the eye when it would attempt to measure it, you perceive a great number of grottoes, the range of which extends for several leagues. The inequality, the steepness of the rocks, their barrenness, must, one would think, have concurred to forbid all access to them ; and yet there is not one that has not been inhabited by some of the pious recluses, who have filled the world with the fame of their austerities and their virtues. Long before the time of St. Saba, they were peopled by cenobites and anchorets,

and their number increased considerably under that illustrious saint. Prayer, meditation, the praises of the Lord, and the labour of their hands, occupied their days and were continued amid the silence of night.

In the year 1100, the infidels made a dreadful slaughter of these recluses, four or five hundred of whose heads were shown to me preserved as relics. Now these grottoes have no other inhabitants than blue pigeons, to which they serve for retreats, and which are fond of building their nests in them.

There are few pictures so interesting to Christian piety as that which St. Ephraim has left us of the anchorets, whose penitent and holy life has given celebrity to these deserts.

“The caverns and the rocks,” says he, “are their abodes; they shut themselves up in the mountains, as behind walls and inaccessible ramparts. The ground is their table; the wild herbs which it produces are their ordinary food, and the water flowing in the brooks, or gushing from the clefts or crannies of the rocks, is their only beverage. They make a church of every place to which they come; their prayers are incessant, and they pass the livelong day in that holy exercise; the praises of the Lord are their sacrifices, which they offer to him in the recesses of their caverns. They are themselves both priests and victims; they cure our complaints by the efficacy of their prayers. These holy intercessors are always present before God, and never separate from him. They know not what it is to aspire to honours, to raise themselves to the first ranks; their low estate is all their glory; and by means of this they strive to render them-

selves faithful imitators of him who, being rich, out of love to us made himself poor. They allow themselves no rest in this world, because they are full of spiritual consolations ; they wander about in the deserts, and live with the wild beasts which they there meet with ; they are on the tops of the hills like burning torches, giving light to those who come to seek them from the impulse of a sincere piety. They are in the solitudes like walls which cannot be shaken, and this it is that causes them to retain there a solid and constant peace ; they rest upon the hills like doves, and they perch like eagles on the tops of the most elevated rocks. If they are ever weary, in consequence of their toils, it is a sort of pleasure to them to take a little repose on the ground ; but presently they awake, and with fresh fervour their voices, like clanging trumpets, sound forth on all sides the praises of God. Christ, who never forsakes them, and the hosts of his angels which incessantly surround them, defend them against the attacks of their enemies. If they kneel upon the ground, it is presently steeped with their tears ; and when their prayers are finished, God himself does not disdain to serve his servants.

“ Their death is neither less happy nor less admirable than their life : they take no care to construct themselves tombs, for they are crucified to the world, and the vehemence of the love which unites them to Jesus Christ has already given them their death-blow. Frequently, the very spot where they stopped to hold their fasts is that of their sepulchre. Several of them have sunk into a sweet and quiet sleep, in the force and fervour of their prayers. Others, fixed as it were on the points of sharp

rocks, have voluntarily resigned their souls into the hands of God. There have been some, who, wandering about with their usual simplicity, died in the mountains, which have served them for a sepulchre ; some, knowing that the moment of their deliverance had arrived, confirmed in the grace of Jesus Christ, after providing themselves with the sign of the cross, have laid themselves down in their graves. Others have fallen asleep in the Lord, while eating the herbs prepared for them by his providence. Some there have been who, while singing the praises of the Lord, have expired in a moment with the effort, death alone terminating their prayers and stopping their mouths. Now, these incomparable men are awaiting the trump of the archangel, and the arrival of that moment when the earth shall give up, at the command of God, the bodies committed to it ; when they shall live and flourish anew, like lilies in ineffable whiteness, brightness, and beauty ; when Jesus Christ shall crown with his hand, and reward with a happy eternity the hardships which they have endured for his service and glory."

The monastery of St. Saba is now inhabited by monks of the Greek ritual : their life is as austere as that of La Trappe, with the exception of oil, which we are not allowed to use ; but their bread is far inferior to our's. Notwithstanding the severity of their fasts and their penitence, they enjoy excellent health, and live to a great age : I have seen one of a hundred-and-one years, and who was not yet *hors de combat*.

I was received by the community with all sorts of attentions. The apartment allotted to me is a very clean

room, surrounded with very elegant divans. On the wall hung a picture of the Virgin, before which a lamp was burning. I would fain have solicited the favour of being put into a simple cell ; but I felt that my request would not be granted, and I spoke of nothing but my gratitude.

My dinner, decently served up on a tray, was soon brought to me : it consisted of olives, fishes' roes, and a kind of salad, just brought from Jerusalem. I had reluctantly suffered myself to be installed in my little saloon ; I could not resolve to take my meat seated on a divan — I, a monk of La Trappe, and in the monastery of St. Saba, a few paces from some hundred heads of martyrs ! To the great surprise of the brethren, I therefore carried my tray to the grotto of St. Saba, hewn out of the rock not far from the convent ; and there, seated on the stone on which he formerly sat, having another stone for my table, I enjoyed one of the happy dinners similar to those of which I have already sometimes made mention.

In the afternoon, I went to see the interior of the house, in all its details. I tarried a few moments in the chapel, in which is interred St. John of Damascus.

On quitting it to proceed to the towers, I was struck to find on the terrace a superb palm-tree, whose fresh foliage of a beautiful green formed the most pleasing contrast with the uniformly yellow or greyish tint of this barren desert. I could not tire of looking at it : the traveller who meets with an oasis amidst the burning deserts of Libya does not experience a more soothing or a more delightful impression.

In one of the towers I found a great quantity of small

and very black loaves. The famished Arabs come and knock at the door, and, from a height of eighty feet, the fathers let down to them by a cord this food, which they devour several times with their eyes before it reaches them. Probably the robbers could not get to this place on the day when they plundered the convent. Perhaps, too, the prey appearing to them to be of too little value, they confined themselves to flour and rice. I took with me one of these loaves, which I cannot compare to any thing but to those which are made in Europe for dogs. Two days afterwards, I ate it, and, what is extraordinary, I thought it good : it did me no harm.

On descending, I went to see the Greek pilgrims, with whom I had come, at dinner. There were upwards of a hundred, most of them seamen, from the Archipelago. There were no women among them : they cannot, upon any pretext whatever, be admitted into the monastery.

The new guests were supplied with lentil soup, onions, fishes' roes, afterwards coffee, an article of prime necessity in the Levant, and lastly, brandy. The prior dined with them, and all ate in silence.

Towards evening, more provisions came from Jerusalem. They seemed to me less necessary than I had at first thought them.

What I saw led me to believe that the good prior had somewhat exaggerated the mischief done by the Arabs, or that they had perhaps not been able to carry away all that they would fain have done.

Meanwhile, night had fallen, and the monks were sleeping soundly till the hour for singing the praise of

God should arrive. For my part, stretched on my divan, I should have striven in vain to get a few moments' sleep: all that the day had shown me—that dreary and wild nature; that desolate soil; those rugged mountains stricken with sterility; those caverns; those yawning rocks; those deserted and silent grottoes; those deep abysses; that stream, rolling along scarcely water sufficient to cover the rocks over which it flows; that monastery; those heads of martyrs, preserved there to attest that the religion of Christ is not afraid of executioners; those monks, maintaining their post and perpetuating themselves under the protection of Heaven, amidst the most inveterate enemies of the cross; the remembrance of so many heroes of penitence, who sacrificed themselves on the same spot, and bequeathed their examples to their successors; that horrible famine among the Arabs; that immense charity of the good fathers—all these images, all these thoughts, succeeded one another in my mind, and, if I may be allowed the expression, urged one another forward with such precipitation, that, for a long time, it was not able to tarry at the feeling which each of them excited.

And when this rapid movement had somewhat slackened, and it was possible for me to meditate, then, thinking of that which of all things on earth is dearest to my heart, “What is become,” said I, “what is become of the house, where, admitted to penitence, I, too, enjoyed happiness, a still purer happiness than that enjoyed in their cells by the good fathers of St. Saba, unfortunately, alas! cut off from unity! Where is that couch which the world deems so hard, and upon which I

have slept more sweetly than ever I did in my life? Who would have imagined that men who expect felicity only from indulgence, from gold, from power, from voluptuousness, should take upon them the task of depriving other men of the felicity of lying hard, of cultivating the ground with the sweat of their brow, of nourishing their bodies with a little bread, or pulse moistened with a few drops of water!" And my eyes filled with tears, and sighs burst from my oppressed bosom, and I found myself on the point of murmuring.

But, amidst these tears and these lamentations, wrung from me by the pain of being separated from an order to which I was bound by my love still more than by my vows, all at once an inward voice stopped me and softly asked if, among all the rules to which I had bound myself by my vows, the holy will of God is not the first and the most sacred; if this holy will of God is not the characteristic sign of the faithful Trappist!

And my tears and my sighs ceased; and, with a heart subdued by an ineffable charm to the will of my Jesus, I began to comprehend that there is more mercy, more kindness than tongue can express, in his severest dispensations towards those who love him; I comprehended how blind, how unjust one must be, not to look beyond human injustice, in order to consider both the justice of Him who makes it subservient to his purposes, and the justice of the things which he does.

And methought at that moment my blessed Saviour addressed me in particular, and said to me: "If I had not permitted that which it has pleased my wisdom to permit, shouldst thou ever have had the happiness to

come and visit me, and to worship me on the very spot where I was born, where I suffered, where I died for thee? to touch with thy hands and thy lips both the stone of my manger and the stone of my tomb, which my body has touched? to see, to contemplate closely, to what a degree I abased myself to save thee, to save sinners? And doth not my grace tell thee that thou wilt carry back with thee more faith, more hope, more love?"

And fresh tears, different from the former, tears this time of peace and charity, trickled from my eyes, and I blessed the Lord; and, till the last moment of my life, I shall treasure the remembrance of the happy night spent at St. Saba.

At eight in the morning, I went down to the brook Cedron, to see, at the extremity of a cavern, a spring which is named after the saint; and which, according to a very ancient tradition, God granted in compliance with his prayer. This spring, I was assured, has never been dry since that time; and hither it is that the pilgrims usually come for water.

I was preparing to return to Jerusalem, when lamentable cries, which we heard outside the monastery, and the affrighted looks of the good monks, from whom I was about to part, made me apprehend, for a moment, that some new misfortune had happened.

A very numerous body of Arabs had possessed themselves of all the outlets, and would not suffer one of our pilgrims to go out till he had given them a *bakschisch*. I, nevertheless, mounted my horse. The moment I appeared, the yells were redoubled, and the mob thronged around me. However, it was by no means my intention,

still less was it consistent with my character, to comply with their requisition. I desired the janissary, who had accompanied the pilgrims, to declare to the Arabs that I was a Frank, a subject of the mighty emperor of Austria, and that I would not degrade myself by paying them the very smallest piece of money, which they had no right to demand.

My resolute air overawed them. While the janissary and the warden, both greatly embarrassed, interpreted my words to them, I passed through their midst, without their daring to seize the bridle and to stop me.

The prior hastened to join me, and to express the pain he felt at what had just happened. He assured me that, hitherto, the Arabs had never laid the pilgrims under contribution when leaving St. Saba, and charitably placed the violence of those unfortunate creatures to the account of the famine. I left him, full of gratitude for the kind hospitality which I had received at his hands.

The conduct of the Arabs was not calculated to excite in the pilgrims a feeling of security. Most of them drew back, expecting fresh extortions; some appeared to be afraid lest they should not get off by merely suffering in their purse. This was an additional motive for us to observe the same order, the same precautions, on our return, as at our departure; at least, till we should be beyond the mountains, amidst which, attacks or ambushes were most to be feared. Four hours afterwards, we had all entered the holy city without molestation. Farewell!

LETTER XXIX.

ROAD TO BETHANY—GROUND WHERE GREW THE FIG-TREE STRUCK WITH BARRENNESS — BETHANY — SEPULCHRE OF LAZARUS — HOUSE OF MARTHA AND MARY — STONE, ON WHICH CHRIST IS SAID TO HAVE RESTED HIMSELF—BETHPHAGE—PLACE WHERE JUDAS HANGED HIMSELF—IMPRUDENCE.

Jerusalem, March 20th, 1832.

Early yesterday morning, my dear Charles, I was with my dragoman on the road to Bethany. As we approached the Mount of Olives, we met some women going to Jerusalem, with goats' milk, to sell. They offered me some; but I did not take any: I have sometimes tasted that milk, which I dislike much. The Turks are very fond of it, and use it, almost habitually, at their meals.

Having proceeded about half a league, we halted for a few minutes before the ground, where, according to tradition, grew the fig-tree which was struck with barrenness by Jesus Christ.

“And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany,” says St. Mark, (xi. 12 et seq.) “he was hungry. And seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.”

We proceeded a few paces farther, and arrived at Bethany. This was once a small town, belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. In the early ages of the Church, it was frequently visited by the Christians. It is now but a mean village, inhabited by a few Turkish families.

Its name signifies, according to some, house of obedience, or of affliction; according to others, house of gratification. The Turks call it, at the present day, Lazari, in memory of Lazarus, for whom they testify great veneration.

The houses are very low and flat-roofed, like all those in Judea. The first thing that struck me, on entering, was to see sheep and goats on several of these platforms; I had not, as yet, observed any thing of the kind in the villages of Palestine.

I halted on the right, at the spot where the sepulchre of Lazarus is situated. As you must descend about thirty very dark steps to arrive at this tomb, I had two torches lighted; then, falling on my knees at the threshold, I read, with deep devotion, the eleventh chapter of the gospel of St. John, which contains the affecting account of the death and resurrection of the friend of Jesus.

“Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.”

And, when I came to this passage—

“When Jesus saw her (Mary) weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and he said: Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him” — when, I say, I came to this place, I found it impossible to repress the emotions of my heart. It seemed as if the great miracles of that kind, that compassionate, that tender Jesus, were about to be performed before my face; and my tears trickled down,

mingling with those which his ineffable charity caused him to shed, as though I had been one of the happy witnesses who had come with Mary.

And, as if the words, "Come and see," had been addressed to me, too, I felt impelled, in my turn, to approach the tomb, and to look closely at it, to gather from it the awful and wholesome lessons that are given by death. Then, having come to this remarkable circumstance, recorded by the evangelist:—"And some of them (the Jews) said, Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"—I could not help sighing, on recognizing in it a language, alas! too common in the world which I have quitted; that language of human pride, which foolishly deems its paltry wisdom wiser than the divine wisdom!

How, my friend, shall I describe to you the effect produced in me by the all-powerful words which raised Lazarus from his sepulchre, and restored him alive to his disconsolate family!

"He (Jesus) cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go."

Ah! my dear Charles, know you not that he who writes these lines was another Lazarus, whom the same all-powerful voice had called forth from another tomb? And could there be a place that more strongly reminded his gratitude of the miracle of mercy by which his bonds were loosed and he was restored to a new life?

Having finished reading, and passed a few moments in meditation on the grave thoughts to which it gave rise, I began to descend. At the foot of the twenty-fourth step, you come to a sort of vestibule, where stands an altar of stone, at which the Franciscan Fathers perform mass twice a year. You are obliged to stoop in descending the last six steps, after which, you find yourself in a grotto, about twenty feet long and five wide, to the left of which you see a vaulted cell : here it was that Lazarus was deposited, and that he remained four days after he was buried.

The house of Martha and Mary was at a considerable distance from the tomb of their brother. My dragoman conducted me to the spot where it is said to have stood ; I could not discover there any other vestige of a dwelling than a ruined wall.

Thence I went to see the stone, where, according to tradition, Christ rested before he entered Bethany, when Martha, apprized of his coming, went forth to meet him. This stone is about three feet long and two wide ; it is of granite. Around it have been placed stones of less size, which serve to cause it to be remarked. The pilgrims repair to this stone, before which they kneel and pray. To prevent the injuries which their pious thefts might occasion, they are forbidden, upon pain of excommunication, to break off fragments, by means of a hammer or any other implement ; but they are allowed to pick off little bits, if they can, with their nails.

On my return to Jerusalem, I passed through Bethphage, formerly a small village, the fertile fields of which subsisted part of the animals, principally lambs, destined

for sacrifices. A few wretched huts only are left. It was from this place that Jesus sent two of his disciples to a neighbouring village, to fetch the ass on which he rode at the time of his triumphant entry into Jerusalem ; thus fulfilling the prophecy made several centuries before by Zachariah to the Jewish nation : " Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass," &c.

At some distance from Bethphage, I saw the spot rendered for ever horrible by the death of Judas. The remembrance of this victim of despair, who sold his master for a few pieces of money, which remorse would not allow him to enjoy, produced a most painful impression upon my soul.

The day was dull and gloomy, and served to increase the sadness and the melancholy that oppressed my heart. Seized with an inward shudder, I had scarcely courage and strength to approach this theatre of the divine vengeance ; I seated myself a few paces off, on a detached rock. Assailed by a thousand painful thoughts, I felt a desire to be alone. I ordered my dragoman to return, and continued to meditate. My reflections dwelt with inexpressible horror on the awful fate of those sinners, whom the Scripture speaks of, and into whose mouths it puts these words of anguish : " Our transgressions and our crimes are upon us ; they dry us up : how can we live ? " — of those great culprits, whom remorse pursues and tortures, and who fancy that they are escaping from it by rushing with blind fury into the presence of divine justice.

And then my soul was led gently back to infinite

mercy. Oh ! how kind is that Jesus, who wishes that the most guilty, as well as the most righteous, of his children, shall retain and practise hope ; who, persecuted, betrayed, delivered up to his enemies, still desires to be himself the hope of the persecutors and the traitors ; who declares that he has always his eyes open upon those who hope in him ; that he will be their helper, their protector ; that he will heal them ; that he will save them ; that, in short, the only sin not to be forgiven is, not to apply for his mercy, or to say with Cain : “ My crime is too great for me to obtain pardon.”

Meanwhile, night approached : I was afraid that I should not have time to get back to Jerusalem. I had to descend a very steep part of the Mount of Olives ; then to cross the valley of Jehoshaphat ; and afterwards, to ascend the steepest side of the hill on which St. Stephen was stoned.

The Turkish tombs which were before me, and among which, a few moments before, I had perceived some women, were all at once deserted. It came into my mind, that the chiefs of some of the Bedouin tribes, in the vicinity of Jordan, had been summoned to appear that very day before the governor, as being accused of a hostile disposition towards the Egyptians. I was not without apprehension, when at that very moment I discerned, behind heaps of stones, points of lances, which glistened in the twilight ; and presently several Bedouins descended the hill at full trot. They had seen me. I repented, I must confess, having staid there alone. To get out of the scrape, I had no other resource than to put on a bold look : I went straight up to them. The first

that I came to stopped before me, eyeing me stedfastly. I saluted him, by laying my hand on my heart, and repeated the same gesture to the others. They passed on without saying a single word, without even asking me for tobacco, a thing which they never forget when they meet a Frank. My dress indicated nothing that could tempt them. An enormous straw hat, a shabby white robe, a black threadbare scapulary, were no doubt thought by them not to bespeak a wealthy pilgrim; and to this air of poverty I was probably indebted for the favour of returning safe and sound to Jerusalem.

The gates were just going to be shut: a few minutes later and I must have passed the night outside, without a shelter, which, in a country like this, is never without danger.

Farewell, my friend. Unless unforeseen obstacles derange my plans, I shall as soon as possible make an excursion to the Jordan and the Dead Sea, of which my next letter shall give you an account.

LETTER XXX.

EXCURSION TO THE JORDAN AND THE DEAD SEA—TRAVELLING COMPANIONS—PRECAUTION FOR THE SAFETY OF THE CARAVAN—BEDOUIN ESCORT—ARABIAN HORSES—PROVISIONS STOLEN—JERICHO—THE AGA AND HIS SUPERB HORSE—ELISHA'S FOUNTAIN—MOUNTAIN WHERE OUR SAVIOUR PASSED FORTY DAYS IN FASTING AND PRAYER—RUINS OF JERICHO—THE JORDAN—THE DEAD SEA—SALT—STATUE OF LOT'S WIFE—RETURN TO JERUSALEM—NIGHT SPENT AT THE GATE OF THE CITY.

Jerusalem, March 28th, 1832.

I have succeeded, my dear friend, in executing the plan which I mentioned to you at the end of my last letter. I have visited the Jordan as well as the Dead Sea,

and I hasten to give you the particulars of that excursion, not less interesting than toilsome and perilous.

I was on the point of starting, when the Russian Consul at Jaffa recommended to me two young Frenchmen, who had been travelling for the last two years in Greece and Asia. These gentlemen called to see me; I found them very amiable; we soon got acquainted, and the very same day we agreed to make the trip together.

It was necessary to obtain the permission of the Egyptian governor, who now commands in Jerusalem, and who, by his firmness, has made himself feared by the Arabs. He granted it the more willingly, because Ibrahim, not wholly without uneasiness respecting the ultimate issue of the war, is endeavouring to conciliate more especially the good-will of the Europeans: and his compliance was moreover marked by all the politeness, all the grace, of which a man of his country is susceptible. That our excursion might be performed with the greater safety, he sent for the sheik of the tribe of Bedouins nearest to that part of the Dead Sea which we intended to visit; and, for fear this chief should suspect some ambush, he gave to the messenger a letter explanatory of the motives for which he summoned him to Jerusalem.

At any time, the journey to the Dead Sea is attended with danger, but this danger has been greatly increased since the invasion of the pacha of Egypt. The governor has not troops enough to repress the Arabs, and their depredations are becoming more frequent from day to day.

The sheik arrived on the day after the next, and swore by his head to bring us back safe and sound, on condition of our taking an escort of twenty Bedouins, which he would provide for us. Our departure was fixed for the 24th. Our caravan was to be composed of about thirty persons, namely, the sheik, twenty Bedouins, my two young friends, Messrs. C. and B., an American who joined us, a dragoman, a Greek servant, the janissary of the monastery, a Turkish soldier belonging to the governor, and your humble servant.

Accordingly, on the 22nd, at eight in the morning, we set out from Jerusalem, headed by the Turkish soldier, who carried a lance. We were all well mounted, armed cap-a-pee, and determined, in case of our meeting with an enemy, not to submit to be robbed. I had put off my monastic dress, which would have incommoded me too much for defence. Be not surprised, my dear friend, to see a Trappist armed: on this point I had sought to set my conscience at ease. I was assured that it was allowable for me to bear arms, since it was not to go to war that I provided myself with them; but to save my own life, and the life of my companions, in case of attack. I was sensible, on my return, that this reason was not wholly free from objection. At first, I had not looked at the matter so closely.

We halted for a moment before the residence of the governor, to receive the papers requisite for us, and left the city by the gate of St. Stephen, where some armed Bedouins of our escort were waiting for us. When our baggage-horse, laden with provisions, came up, the Bedouins, hard pressed by famine, especially at this

disastrous time, begged earnestly for bread. I was for giving them some ; but it was justly observed that, if we yielded so readily to their solicitations, there would be no order whatever in our meals ; that, on the first cravings of hunger, our Bedouins would renew their entreaties ; that we had more than thirty mouths to feed ; and that, if we would not run the risk of soon seeing our resources exhausted, we ought to defer this distribution till the hour for dinner. These considerations prevailed. We descended the hill where St. Stephen was stoned, crossed the brook Cedron, and passed the garden of Gethsemane ; and, after leaving the Mount of Olives on our left, and traversed the valley of Jehoshaphat, we took the road to Bethany, where we arrived in three quarters of an hour. Half a league farther, we found our sheik waiting for us, with the rest of his troop. Mounted on a mare of extraordinary beauty, and armed with a lance, he placed himself at our head. All the Bedouins that we met approached him, and gave him their hand ; those of our escort did the same. It seemed to us that this was a mutual sign of recognition, by which each knew whether the other belonged to a friendly or a hostile tribe.

The Bedouins are of middling stature, well made, spare, and indefatigable. Some of them have very fine faces ; all have a characteristic expression in their features ; and they are, in general, dark as Ethiopians. They go barefoot. Most of them wear a long coat, fastened round the waist by a belt. Some of them are wrapped in a sort of white blanket, with coloured stripes, which they arrange according to circumstances : they

throw it over the arm in hot weather, over the shoulders when they are cold, and over the head when it rains. On horseback, they are armed with a dagger and a musket, or a lance.

Some of those who formed our escort marched by our side. Most of them kept along the hills and the rocks, that they might be able the more easily to discover any hidden foe, and give notice of the approach of Arabs, who might be coming to surprise us: these were our scouts.

As for our sheik, in order to display his forecast, his cleverness, and, more especially, the spirit of his mare, he would sometimes dash away from us at full gallop, in spite of the inequalities of a stony and difficult road, and soon be out of our sight; but presently we perceived him on the top of a mountain, which we should have thought it impossible for him to reach. Then, stopping for a moment to look about him, he would clear, with the rapidity of lightning, the space by which we were separated, and come back and rejoin us.

None of the Arabian horses that I have seen in Europe can be compared to the Arab steed, such as he is in the country where he is bred: there it is that he appears in all his beauty, all his vigour. The mare of the Arab is his wealth; she feeds him in emergency, and saves his head, when the hand of the oppressor would strike it off. How beautiful, how true, is the picture which Job has drawn of the horse!

“Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible.

He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength : he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear and is not affrighted ; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage ; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting."

In Arabia there are but two breeds of horses : the *kadichi*, which are the common sort ; and the *cochlani*, a noble breed, generally supposed to have come originally from the stables of Solomon. The utmost care is taken to keep this breed pure. The *cochlani* will pass whole days without food ; he will endure unheard-of fatigues, and fears no danger : he is absolutely the horse of Job.

The Arabs make it a point of great importance to preserve the pedigree of their horses. To this end they keep regular registers : the excellent and pure blood of a horse reflects honour upon his owner. M. Rousseau has given a copy of one of these pedigrees, which is so curious that I cannot refrain from quoting at least a part of it.

"In the name of God, clement and merciful, from whom we expect all help and assistance, the Prophet has said : My people shall never join to strengthen error. The object of this paper is as follows :—

"We, the undersigned, declare before the supreme God, certify, and attest, swearing by our fate, our fortune, and our writings, that the bay mare, marked (with such or such marks), is descended from noble progenitors,

both on the side of the dam and of the sire, for three direct and successive generations; that she possesses all the qualities of those mares spoken of by the Prophet, when he says : Their bellies shall be treasuries and their backs seats of honour. Supported by the testimony of our predecessors, we attest, &c.

“ God is the best of witnesses.”

We had not been travelling an hour before we perceived that the Arab, who had charge of the horse laden with the provisions, was robbing us unmercifully : whatever he could lay hands on was transferred to his mouth or his pockets. An Arab delights in thieving. We placed him in the centre, and directed that he should be closely watched : for it would be impossible for us to procure victuals and especially bread during our journey.

Ever since our departure from Jerusalem, we had marched continually between sterile, grayish, treeless, shadeless hills; at the foot of some of them we merely remarked here and there a patch covered with poppies and yellowish daisies. I frequently saw our Arabs, as they passed near bushes, pull up some roots and greedily devour them. This wrung my heart; I turned away my face, and thought of those sumptuous banquets which I used to give in other days of painful memory—banquets, the value of which would have been a fortune to so many wretched creatures.

The farther we advanced, the worse the roads became : nothing but stones, deep ditches to cross, parched and dreary mountains, rocks on either hand, frightful abysses, into which one false step of our horses would have

plunged us. The heat was so intense that in an hour's time M. C—— was struck by a *coup de soleil*. We moved on in profound silence. Nought was to be heard save the prayers of the sheik, chanting, in a monotonous tone, verses of the Koran. Some very pretty black and white birds flitted before us, and enormous eagles hovered over the hills by which we were environed. At length, after a march of six leagues, we perceived from the top of a mountain the plain of Jericho, where we arrived in another hour. If ever, in my travels, my imagination, picturing to itself the situation or appearance of places, has found its preconceived notions egregiously erroneous, it was at the sight of the present Jericho.

Ancient Jericho, built by the Jebusites, was the first Canaanitish town taken by the Israelites under the conduct of Joshua. The gold, the silver, and the copper were consecrated to the Lord, after which the place was burned. Men and cattle were all put to death: not a creature was spared, excepting the family of Rahab, in recompence for the reception which she had given to the messengers sent by the Israelites to explore the country. Joshua cursed the town, and pronounced an anathema against any one who should attempt to rebuild its walls. This malediction did not prevent an idolater of Bethel, named Hiel, from rebuilding them, during the reign of Ahab. Hiel was punished for it by the death of all his children.

The last kings of Judah had embellished Jericho. Herod of Ascalon erected a palace, and fixed his residence there. There, too, was a magnificent amphitheatre

which the Romans seized during the reign of Vespasian. Antony had made Cleopatra a present of the domain of Jericho.

This place now consists of a few huts, built of earth or reeds. An enclosure, formed of faggots, of thorns, and thistles, which the jackals scale in the night, is a substitute for walls. Apart stands a square tower, which is falling to ruin; this is the mansion of the governor.

We alighted at this place and entered a court, where we found some Bedouins, their wives, and their children, lying round a reservoir full of brackish water. A little further on were assembled asses, goats, and fowls; among which we remarked with surprise a superb horse, black as jet, with flowing mane and majestic port, the finest animal I ever beheld. He belonged to the governor. Such was the filthy state of the court that we knew not where to set our feet. We, nevertheless, needed some refreshment; for we wished that same day, if possible, to visit the spring whose water Elisha changed from bitter to sweet. At length, on prowling about in the environs, we discovered an old wall still of sufficient height to afford us some shade. At the foot of it ran the water of a little spring, along a wretched turf scorched by the sun; thither we hastened to seat ourselves. The provisions were brought, but, to our great mortification, they were found much less in quantity than we expected. The person who had been especially charged with this business at Jerusalem had not calculated upon thirty travellers; and the knavery of our Arab, by the way, had aggravated the inconvenience. On the other

hand, in vain we offered to pay a very high price for bread, or at least for flour for making cakes. Meanwhile our Bedouins asked importunately for something to eat. At length we were fortunate enough to procure a very fine sheep. Till it could be cooked, we satisfied our people in the best way we could.

While we were taking our frugal meal, the sheik came and sat down by us. He appeared to be hungry, and accepted, without hesitation, what it was in our power to offer him. At the moment when he was raising what had been given him to his lips, a Bedouin approached. He immediately lowered his hand, and shared his portion with his travelling companion; but no sooner had he made this generous division, than up came another Bedouin, to whom he cheerfully gave half of what he had left. Nothing surpasses the generosity of the Arab on such an occasion: he shares his food with the first comer. The poor wretch who passes before his tent enters without being invited; drinks, eats, and goes away without so much as thanking him, because his heart tells him that he would do the same. "O ye wealthy of Europe," I exclaimed, "ye, who are taught by a religion of truth that the poor are your brethren, that ye ought to be their supporters, their protectors; that the riches which you possess have been given to you not to gratify sensual appetites and vanity, but that you might expend the surplus in good works, and especially in works of charity; ye, who forget on what conditions Heaven has committed to you this sacred deposit, and, squandering it every day, offend God, at the same time that you commit a sort of robbery in regard to the poor;

ye rich without compassion, come and contemplate the Bedouin ! ”

The moment we had finished our repast, we hastened to take advantage of the remainder of the day for the excursion which we had planned. The aga resolved to accompany us. He mounted the beautiful horse, of which I just now made mention, and during the ride he amused himself with making him cut capers. In an hour we arrived at Elisha's spring.

The water of this spring is beautiful, limpid, excellent. It gushes forth in an inconsiderable stream, but of picturesque appearance. In the time of Elisha, this water was unwholesome and pernicious, not only to man and beast, but also to trees and plants, which perish under its influence. The inhabitants of Jericho, grieved at the continual mischief which it occasioned, had recourse to the prophet ; hoping that, by his intercession, God would be pleased to put a stop to it. They went to seek him.

“ Behold, I pray thee,” said they to him, “ the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth : but the water is naught, and the ground barren. And he said unto them : Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring, and cast the salt in there and said : Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters ; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha, which he spake.” (II Kings, xi. 19, et seq.)

We all drank of this water with extreme pleasure.

We were at the very foot of the mountain in which

the spring has its source, and I was the more desirous to go up to the top of it, because it was on these rocks that our Saviour passed forty days in fasting and prayer. I should there have seen, moreover, the remains of a building and a church, the more venerable, inasmuch as, according to grave traditions, it was here that the monastic life commenced. I knew, besides, that from the top the view extends over the whole country of the Ammonites; but it was now too late to gratify my curiosity, however strong it might be. It was time to return to Jericho.

On our way thither we passed some ruins, which are no doubt those of an ancient town. On reaching our quarters, we found ourselves in a double dilemma: a great number of mouths and but little food for them. Thanks to the sheep which had not yet been consumed, to the rice which we discovered in our baggage, and, above all, to greater moderation than usual, we got over the first inconvenience. The second remained undiminished. Surrounded by men, women, and children, whose filthiness made the heart heave, we had reason to apprehend miseries of more than one kind, if we should have the imprudence to stay with them. I proposed to pass the night on a greensward, which I had perceived near some nopals; and, having already set the example by going thither, I began to arrange matters, and to cut off with my sword the long sprays of those trees to make a shelter for ourselves, when our sheik came with loud cries to oppose our intention of sleeping out of doors. He then fell to enumerating the risks that we should run. "The least," said he, "is to be killed by the Bedouins,

or devoured by wild beasts ;” adding, in a solemn tone : “ I have made myself responsible for you to the governor of Jerusalem, and, if I am to keep my word, I must insist on your going back to the *castle*.” Unwilling to cross him, we abandoned our resolution.

On our return, we found our dragoman haranguing the crowd collected round him, and reading to it the governor’s firman. He might have introduced into it just what he pleased ; for not a creature, not even the sheik or the aga, could read.

At last, however, we were invited to go and sleep on the platform of the tower, and were absolutely forced to comply. We ascended to it by a stone staircase in bad condition, had the place swept as clean as possible, and fixed our quarters there.

Luckily, the night was magnificent : the stars shone with extraordinary brilliancy. Wrapped in my cloak, I sat down on the platform, but, though much fatigued, I could not close my eyes : sleep fled at the idea which wholly engrossed me, that I was at Jericho, not far from the Jordan and the Dead Sea. I was agitated by my recollections, as though I had seen the army of the Israelites making a circuit round the city, followed by the priests with the ark of the covenant ; as though I had heard the piercing din of the trumpets, and the crash of the falling ramparts, and the shouts of victory raised by Joshua’s soldiers. Then the wretched scattered cabins, which, from the point whence I surveyed them, seemed scarcely to rise above the ground, affected my soul, by reminding me of the anathema pronounced by the conqueror, and showing all that remains of towns when God has cursed them.

At three o'clock I went down stairs. The new day was to be to me one of the most memorable that I had passed in the Holy Land; I was about to devote it to the contemplation of places for ever celebrated in sacred history, and every moment lost was a theft committed upon my religious curiosity.

At half-past four we were all on horseback. The aga of Jericho, armed with a spear, continued to accompany us. We marched in silence over a sandy plain, on which the sun, rising magnificently from behind the mountains of Arabia Deserta, poured a flood of dazzling light. Scarcely could we hear the footfalls of our horses. At intervals we perceived, here and there, patches of green-sward besprinkled with flowers; but in vain did I listen; not a bird of morning hailed by his lays the return of light. The Bedouins acted as scouts, examining every bush. The sheik and the aga advanced cautiously. The idea of God filled my heart. I was on the scene of so many wonders! I was approaching the most celebrated river in the world! that river, whose waters parted to afford a passage for the army of the Israelites; that river, on the banks of which the voice of the Almighty was heard in these words:—"This is my beloved son;" and I was going to the very spot where Jesus was baptized by his holy precursor; in short, I was going to the JORDAN. I murmured that name with delight.

In my youth, when approaching the Tiber, I had felt a profound impression, but an impression that affected the mind more than the heart: here it was the reverse. The idea of the Tiber, and all the recollections which it calls forth, left my eyes dry; not so that of the Jordan,

and of the circumstances connected with it. The bushes became by degrees more numerous, a livelier green indicated that the wished-for river was not far distant. I handed my arms to my dragoman. I did not like to approach it in a warlike attitude. Presently I perceived a yellowish winding stream, running with great rapidity between two banks, planted with willows. This was the Jordan. On the side upon which we were, the bank is very steep, and the river at a considerable depth below it; but this is not the case on the opposite side. I fell upon my knees, and, according to custom, I read the Holy Scripture. But how much more intensely did I feel this sort of impression, which is almost involuntary, when reading the circumstances on the very spot where they occurred!

My travelling companions bathed in the river. I had purposed to bathe too, and even to swim across it; but, as it was only seven o'clock in the morning, as I was in a perspiration, and it was but a few months since I had been struck with paralysis, I durst not venture.

The water was not four feet deep; but the current is so rapid, that those who attempted to pass from one bank to the other, without swimming, had great difficulty to do so: it was only by laying hold of each other's hands that they were enabled to withstand the impetuosity of the river. The Greek pilgrims deem it wrong to return to their own country without plunging in and washing themselves; and it is rare that any of them fall victims to the practice.

The Jordan rises in a mountain of the Lebanon, proceeds from north to south, between hills which overlook

an extensive plain, runs through the lake of Genesareth and is lost in the Dead Sea, after a course of about one hundred and fifty miles.

Its breadth, at the part where we were, is one hundred and sixteen English feet, or fifty-four paces: in other places it is much wider. Near its mouth, its bed is at least three hundred feet broad.

Time was precious: our sheik declared that it would be the height of imprudence to tarry longer. According to him, we had to apprehend every moment some attack from the Arabs; he was even certain that the man who had sold us the sheep had come solely for the purpose of counting our number; there were enemies concealed among the clumps of trees by which we were surrounded, and so forth. He insisted that we must absolutely be going.

We replied that we were well aware of the motive for such language by which his countrymen strove to frighten travellers; that we had not come so far, and so well armed, to run away like cowards; that all the Arabs in the world could not intimidate us; and that we would stay just as long as we thought proper.

Among the things which I intended to do before we retired, there were some which, though of inferior interest, I should have been mortified to be obliged to give up. I wished to take with me a few bottles of the water of the river, to pick up a few pebbles from its bed, to pluck some reeds, and to cut myself a cane from one of the trees on the bank: but an idea of far greater importance occupied my mind, and, had I not carried it into execution, it would ever after have haunted me like

a sort of remorse. I wished, at the very spot where our Saviour was baptised, to renew my baptismal vows—vows made to God for me, by those who, at my birth, carried me to the sacred font; which I confirmed myself on the day when I had the happiness to partake for the first time of the holy sacrament; and which, nevertheless, in the stormy course of my life, I had, alas! so often broken. It was this resolution that I executed first.

Kneeling on the margin of the river, my head bowed down to the water in which I had just washed myself, my hand upon my heart, agitated by repentance, grief, and love, and calling God and his angels to witness the sincerity of my sentiments, I uttered, in a voice tremulous with emotion, the following words:—

“O my God! O God, most mighty, most bountiful, most clement, and most merciful! I humbly come to the place where thy Son, my Saviour, was baptised, to renew, from the bottom of my soul, the sacred engagements of my baptism: I renounce Satan, his pomps, and his works; and I give myself up entirely to thee, O my God, to love and to serve thee till my latest breath!”

More than an hour had by this time elapsed. The sheik grew impatient; the janissary, nay, our dragoman himself, grumbled; and, at length, to abridge the delay, if possible, they all made themselves ready for starting. The sheik, the aga of Jericho, and our Turkish soldier, leaning against their horses, waited for me, lance in hand; behind them were our janissary and dragoman; farther on, upon a rising ground, part of our escort were looking stedfastly at the road leading to the Dead Sea; the rest kept at a certain distance to form the rear. The scene was truly picturesque.

It was not without a pang that I found myself compelled to leave the Jordan so soon. In retiring from it, I sighed, frequently turned my head to look at it once more, to see the reeds, the patches of greensward, the clumps of willows on its banks; and, when I had lost sight of it, felt the same sort of pain that one experiences at parting from a friend whom one is not likely to meet again.

We had still two leagues to go before we should reach the Dead Sea. As I approached it, I fell into a kind of melancholy, for which I could not account. I went at a footpace; I advanced unwillingly. The ground over which we were proceeding was a white sand, profusely mixed with particles of salt, and so loose in some places that the horses sank in it up to their knees. The janissary never ceased warning and exhorting us to use the greatest caution, and thought that he had never said enough.

On our right rose hills of sand and chalk, which surprise the traveller by the singularity of their form; you see towers, bastions, pyramids, tents, spectres, fantastic figures. On whatever side I cast my eyes, I perceived only a dreary and sterile nature: all objects are of one uniform colour, white or yellowish; except that, from time to time, you perceive a patch of herbage, parched up and impregnated with salt. I have travelled a great deal, but never met with any thing like this.

We were now approaching the desolate shore of the sea that we had come to visit. We alighted from our horses near a heap of stones, which looked very like the ruins of some castle. I was told that this is the place

where salt is extracted from the water of this sea ; that on the top of these ruins are stationed sentinels to watch that the Arabs do not carry off the animals waiting in the plain for their load.

On advancing to the shore, the first remark I made was, that, notwithstanding a cold and violent north-west wind, the water was scarcely curled, and that it did not break against the beach.

No noise of waves ever interrupts the death-like silence which pervades this region, still horror-stricken at the crimes committed there of old, and at the vengeance inflicted on their account by the Lord. Its bosom contains not a single living creature ; no vessel cleaves its waters ; no bird builds its nest, and sings its loves, in their vicinity ; not a tree grows, not a plant blossoms there : nothing is to be seen but a few sickly, stunted shrubs.

I filled a bottle with water, and lifted it to my mouth ; but I was forced to spit it out again, upon pain of having my tongue and the roof of my mouth flayed. It is infinitely more pungent than that of other seas ; it is, nevertheless, somewhat oily, and, above all, so limpid that the pebbles may be seen most distinctly at the bottom of the basin which contains it. I picked up some of these stones, which I expected to find very hard : in the air they broke of themselves, and seemed to be calcined.

The Mussulmans of our escort bathed and performed the ablutions prescribed by the Koran. None of our other travelling companions followed their example, which gave me the more pleasure, because, had they

acted otherwise, it would have been profaning in some measure the bath of the Jordan. I sealed up, on the shore of the sea, a large bottle filled with its water, and three others with that of the Jordan ; after which I strolled away in quest of some of that fruit which has become so celebrated by the name of Sodom apples, and which resembles, both in colour and shape, large lemons, but has neither their solidity nor their taste. I knew that their beauty pleases the eye, but that, when squeezed ever so little, they break, and you find within nothing but wind and grubs. My search was fruitless. I have, however, seen some of them, but could not procure any excepting at Jerusalem.

After a slight repast, taken apart, we returned to the sea. I was engaged with some of our companions in chasing an enormous lizard, which had crept under a heap of stones ; when, all at once, we heard cries of " Come back ! come back ! the Arabs are coming down the hill." Several times during the day we had had a similar warning ; we paid little attention to it at first ; but, presently, perceiving a great bustle among the people of our escort, we deemed it prudent to rejoin them, and, accordingly, proceeded towards them, but at a very slow pace. In a few moments all were ready to return ; and we set out, after passing three hours near this lake of death.

Experience has confirmed the truth of the statements of respectable writers, relative to the dangers of the journey to the Dead Sea and the Jordan : it is very certain that it would be impossible for a traveller to go thither alone. The Greek pilgrims themselves, who, on

Easter Tuesday, repair to the Jordan, to the number of three or four thousand, are always accompanied by the governor of Jerusalem and three or four hundred soldiers. I am, nevertheless, convinced that the people of the country sometimes exaggerate the danger to induce travellers to take with them a large escort. For the rest, the Arabs of the present day are still as at the time of Saladin,

gli Arabi avari,
Ladroni in ogni tempo e mercenari.*

Had I needed further proof of this, I should have been furnished with it a few moments after our departure.

I had been scarcely half an hour on horseback, when I perceived that I had left behind on the shore a very fine reed from the Jordan. Not liking to lose it, I desired our dragoman to tell one of our Arabs, who appeared to be an intelligent fellow, to turn back and look for it, promising him a handsome *bakschisch* if he brought it to me. "I would lay a wager," said Mons. R "that if he cannot find it, for fear of losing the *bakschisch*, he will cut another reed from the margin of the lake which we left just now, and will bring it to you as your's." I replied that the fraud would be too obvious not to be detected; and that, besides, my reed was broken. A few moments afterwards, shouts of joy were heard issuing from a cloud of dust, and announced to me the return of my messenger. Bating the lie, he had recovered my reed. His first word, brandishing it that I might notice it, was *Bakschisch! bakschisch!* But, as Mons. R

* Tasso, *Gierusalemme liberata*, cant. ix. v. 6.

had predicted, the fellow brought a reed from the banks of the sea in question. I looked stedfastly at him, and clapped spurs to my horse. He said not a word more, but kept hovering about me the whole day, while I pretended not to notice him. However, before we parted, I gave him a trifle, not for the reed, but merely for the trouble of going to and fro, which I did not wish him to take for nothing.

Though, in general, the appellation of *sea* is given only to those immense expanses of water which encompass the land, or which cover a large portion of the surface of the earth in the interior of continents, this word is frequently used in Scripture to designate certain masses of water of far less extent. The Dead Sea is, at the utmost, twenty-four leagues in length, and five or six wide. It is called in Genesis (xiv. 3.), and in Numbers (xxxiv. 3.), the Salt Sea; in history it is named the Eastern Lake, Lake Asphaltites, the Sea of Sodom, the Sea of the Desert; and, by the Arabs, Barrei Louth, that is, the Lake of Lot. It covers the beautiful valley of Siddim, where were situated the five guilty cities, Sodom, Gomorrah, Adama, Seboim, and Bala, or Segor. Before the terrible chastisement inflicted by God on the Pentapolis, the country was so fertile, its woods, its groves, its orchards, watered by the Jordan, were so agreeable, so delightful, that the Scripture likens their advantages to those of Egypt, and represents it as the garden of the Lord (Gen. xiii. 10.)

It is now a region of desolation and death. The divine malediction is not confined to the bed of the waters; it is stamped upon the shores and upon the surrounding

country. It is, as it were, but dust, but ashes, like those of a large fire — ashes, to which dews and rain cannot impart either life or fertility.

Vestiges of the reprobate cities still exist in the Dead Sea. This is a fact, regarded at the present day as incontestable : several travellers have discovered in it remains of walls, pillars, and particularly ruins, conjectured to be those of Segor, a town which was at first spared at the prayer of Lot, but which was finally engulfed when he had withdrawn from it.

I should have been glad to have had an opportunity of satisfying myself on this point, by deferring my return till the evening of the following day ; but this would have been too dangerous under the present circumstances, with the ephemeral government which rules Palestine, and which is most frequently obliged to tolerate or to leave unpunished the crimes which the Arabs are pleased to commit. It is to be presumed, however, that, if the Egyptian sway becomes firmly established, order will be restored. Travellers will then be able to visit these parts with greater safety, and, by means of small vessels, which may easily be constructed, to discover the monuments of the wrath of God at the bottom of the sea which has engulfed them.

Writers and geographers have stated that the Dead Sea is frequently covered with a thick vapour or smoke, which rises from its bosom : others have asserted the very contrary. The fault of travellers in general is, that they make too short a stay in the countries which they visit to be able to say, in a positive manner, what is or is not in this or that country.

For my own part, whenever I have ascended the Mount of Olives, and also during my stay at Bethlehem, I have had occasion to remark this vapour. There are days when it is scarcely perceptible, but in general it is seen very distinctly.

The salt obtained from the Dead Sea forms an important article of commerce. The Arabs carry it for sale to all parts of Palestine, and it is the only kind that is used there. It is universally admitted, that to the abundance of this salt is to be attributed the extraordinary gravity of the waters from which it is extracted. Josephus, in the fourth book of his History of the War of the Jews, relates that it supports upon the surface every thing that is thrown into it; he adds, that the emperor Vespasian, to convince himself of the truth of this assertion, ordered several persons, with their hands and legs tied, to be thrown in, and that not one of them sank. Perhaps we may be allowed to entertain some doubt of the truth of this statement. What I can assert as much more certain is, that several travellers, who have bathed in this water, have floated upon it without being able to swim; but this does not appear to me a sufficient reason for running the same risk.

During the journey I frequently questioned individually the Arabs of our escort and their chiefs, to ascertain if it had ever come to their knowledge that persons who had dwelt from infancy on the shores of this sea had seen any fish in it: they were unanimous in replying *Never*. These men could not have any interest in deceiving me: I consider their testimony as the most positive confirmation of the accounts of historians and travel-

lers, especially those of Marison, who asserts that "such is the noxious nature of these waters, that they suffer nothing that has life to exist in them, and that they kill the fish of the Jordan, which have no sooner entered than they find their grave in them." There are persons who think that not even microscopic animals can subsist there. It has frequently happened that I have met with small white shells, and empty, like those of snails, but they were at a great distance from the shore, and probably came from the Jordan.

To judge from the efforts which I made to obtain precise intelligence on the subject of the chastisement inflicted on Lot's Wife, it is very difficult, not to say impossible, to assign the spot where the disobedience of this woman was punished by her transformation into a statue of salt. It was incontestably at some point very near the shore, but which that is, the diversity of accounts will not admit of deciding. At any rate, the certainty of the fact, attested by the narrative of Moses, and confirmed by the words of Christ himself, is not to be impugned.

We advanced towards Jerusalem, amidst arid mountains, dry torrents, a country entirely desert, similar in this respect to the road which we had travelled the preceding day. As then, eagles were soaring in the air, but in greater number, and sometimes came, flapping their wings, to settle on the heights. Among the rocks, of fantastic shapes, which presented themselves to our view, some exhibited a few blades of grass; others displayed, even on their bare flanks, a patch of verdure, with red or yellow flowers, which render them still more

horrible : images which, I must confess, reminded me, in spite of myself, of those women, slaves to the world, whom age and the passions have robbed of their charms ; and who, by the flowers with which they continue to adorn themselves, only render the ravages of time more conspicuous and more hideous.

As for roads, there are none, excepting narrow paths, the traces of which appear and disappear, as it were, at the same instant. We met, at intervals, one or two Bedouins, armed with muskets, whom our advanced guard stopped and searched, to ascertain whether they had any tobacco, and to rob them of it. These men suffered the greatest part of their provisions to be taken from them without saying a word, calculating, no doubt, that they should make themselves amends on the morrow : had our's been the weaker, they would have submitted to their lot, with the same resignation and in the same hope.

Meanwhile, we pursued our route, without knowing where we were to pass the night. The sheik, the Bedouins, our Turkish soldier, the dragoman, and the janissary, maintained that it would be impossible to reach Jerusalem before sunset, when the gates are closed. They added, that our horses were jaded, and that the safest way was to go to the camp of our Bedouins, from which we were but a few leagues distant. The sheik, in particular, insisted on going no farther. I peremptorily rejected a proposition which could have no other result than to make us lose a day, without compensating us by a few moments' rest among people whose excessive filthiness would, of itself, have prevented us from sleeping.

It was, besides, easy enough to guess the motive which induced our sheik to try to drag us to his residence : he coveted the remainder of our provisions ; and feared lest, if he missed this opportunity, he should lose the prize. For this apprehension I speedily perceived a remedy—to give up the provisions to him—my travelling companions assented. No sooner were we in sight of the camp, than we delivered to our escort and its chief the butter and the rice which remained : as for bread, there was none left. You should have witnessed the dreadful dearth which prevailed at that time, to conceive the burst of joy that proceeded from the wretched Bedouins. Our unexpected generosity gave them all that they wished for ; of course, there was no longer any question about diverging from our track.

The acclivities are frequent and steep ; the heat was excessive ; our horses were exhausted with fatigue, and we were all suffering from a burning thirst. We halted in a little plain, where some grass was to be seen. The sheik sent one of his men to some distance for water. The man staid a long time, and I began to be seriously afraid that we should not reach the holy city before the gates were shut. I soon cheered myself, it is true, by the thought that the complaisance of the governor would cause them to be opened for us. We had still two leagues to go, and the sun was gradually sinking behind the rocks. The night promised to be magnificent ; I found it delightful after the scorching heat of the day.

After we had passed through Bethany, the sight of which renewed all my emotions, all my recollections, our guides, wishing to take a shorter way, led us through

places so encumbered with stones, that sometimes our horses were stopped short, and we were obliged to alight. My poor mare was knocked up.

At length we reached the side of the Mount of Olives, and descended by the tombs of the Jews, whence we perceived the "melancholy" walls of Jerusalem, rising above Mount Sion and Mount Moriah, like a funeral *catafalque* in ruin. That multitude of tombs, whose white stones were visible amid the darkness; those of Absalom and Zachariah, the pinnacles of which were discernible, those places of mourning, those monuments of death, that dust of sepulchres with which I was surrounded, that doleful silence which pervaded these abodes of death — all these forcibly reminded me of the nothingness of human grandeur, of the frailty of life, and transported my thoughts to that sombre region which I must once enter to appear before the awful tribunal of Him, who, in the city that lay before me, mercifully offered himself a sacrifice for the salvation of men; but who, then, alas! will judge me with the severity of his inexorable justice.

It was near nine o'clock, when we found ourselves before the gate of St. Stephen: we begged that it might be opened for us. The Egyptian subaltern, commanding the post, replied that he had not the keys. After a long parley with our dragoman, he was induced, by the promise of a *bakschisch*, to go and acquaint the governor with our arrival. In a few moments he returned, saying, with the expression of regret, that the keys were in the custody of the commandant of the castle, and that it was impossible to obtain admission to him. We were obliged

to make up our minds to pass the night in the open air. I would fain have gone till day-light to the tomb of Absalom, or to that of Barachias, but a few moments' reflection made me apprehensive that the inhabitants of the village of Siloa, a fanatical and thievish race, might perceive our light, and come to molest us : we stretched ourselves, therefore, on the ground, without being able to close our eyes. Hunger annoyed us : a small loaf, which had hitherto escaped our researches, and which we discovered at the bottom of one of our panniers, assisted us to take patience. For want of common water, we drank a little of that from the Jordan, and we thus passed the night around our horses, with part of our retinue. The rising sun found me sitting opposite to the Mount of Olives.

At length the gates were opened : we mounted our horses and made our entry, preceded by our guards. As the way leading from the place where we were to the monastery is the Via Dolorosa, I took this occasion to point out the stations to Mons. R. . . ., who was by my side.

Had we at first bethought ourselves to go to the Jaffa gate, which, it is true, we could not have done without making a considerable circuit, it would, no doubt, have been opened to us. In consequence of the great number of pilgrims arriving on that side, the keys are always kept there ; but, when we thought of this expedient, it was too late.

LETTER XXXI.

DESCRIPTION OF JERUSALEM — MOUNT SION — HOUSE OF CAIAPHAS —
TOMB OF DAVID — THE HALL OF THE LAST SUPPER.

Jerusalem, March 30th, 1832.

Hitherto, my dear Charles, the various excursions which I have hastened to make, and the time which I have been obliged to spend in furnishing you with the particulars of them, have not allowed me to tell you all that I had to say concerning the city itself, in order to make you acquainted with it. I will make amends as much as I can, in the intervals between my little tours ; intervals, of which I always take advantage, to seek out and to examine whatever can be worthy of the curiosity of the traveller, and especially of the Christian pilgrim. It is an ever new gratification to me, to see again and again the things and the places which I have already seen, and to explore the interior and the environs of the city ; and this gratification, whenever I am at liberty for a few moments, I never miss any opportunity of procuring myself.

It takes a man, who is not anxious to observe, only an hour, perhaps less, to make the circuit of Jerusalem. I love to tarry before those walls, built with the fragments of destroyed monuments, to contemplate these ruins of men and ages. I cannot pass so many places, where my Saviour himself, eighteen centuries ago, went about doing good, but this recollection again awakens in my soul all the sentiments which affected it the first time ; and when the heart is thus agitated, it is difficult to walk quick.

The walls which form the present inclosure of Jerusalem, if we may believe various accounts,* were built about the year 1534, by Sultan Soliman, only son of Selim I. Upon them are to be seen various inscriptions, which, no doubt, date from that period ; but I have never been able to obtain any explanation of them that satisfied me. There is, perhaps, no city in the world, where it is less possible to procure certain particulars concerning Jerusalem, than Jerusalem itself. More than once I have had to rectify the interpretations of my dragoman, who nevertheless passes for an adept in the science of inscriptions : he has not always a correct and precise idea of them : he confounds things. A person who has rendered me signal service in this point, is the good brother Elias, of the monastery of St. Saviour, who, having resided thirty years in the Holy Land, is thoroughly acquainted with the country. I have only to regret that his age and his occupations have not permitted him to accompany me in my walks.

D'Anville has proved by strong arguments, and by the measurements which he made on the spot, that ancient Jerusalem could not have been much larger than the modern. It stood nearly on the same site ; with this difference, however, that Calvary was not within its inclosure, but that Mount Sion was. Soliman, on learning that the architect employed in the construction of the walls of the new Jerusalem had not included Mount Sion, ordered his head to be struck off. The walls are about one hundred and twenty feet high : their thickness appeared to me not proportionate to

* See d'Anville's Dissertation on the Extent of ancient Jerusalem.

their height. You see in them stones which belonged to the ancient temple, and which are of extraordinary dimensions.

Ancient Jerusalem had twelve gates :

1. The Cattle gate, *porta Gregis*, built by the high-priest Eliasib. It was thus called, because the cattle, destined for the sacrifices in the Temple, entered at it.

2. The Fish gate, *porta Piscium*, thus named, because it led towards the sea, and the fish, destined for the supply of the city, was brought in that way. It was built by the children of Asnaa, on the return from the Babylonian captivity.

3. The Ancient gate, *porta Vetus*, to which this name was given, because the Chaldeans left it standing when they destroyed all the others. It was rebuilt by Jehoiada, son of Phasea.

4. The Dung gate, *porta Sterquilinia*, by which all sorts of filth were carried out of the city towards the west.

5. The Valley gate, *porta Vallis*, leading to the valley of Jehoshaphat, where the bodies of those who had been executed on Mount Calvary were thrown. This gate was built by Hanun, after the return from Babylon. Subsequently it was called the Golden gate, *porta Aurea*.

6. The Fountain gate, *porta Fontis*, near the spring of Siloa, and which adjoined the king's gardens. It was rebuilt by Sellum, son of Choloza.

7. The Water gate, *porta Aquarum*, through which passed the Nathinians, who carried water for the service of the Temple.

8. The Horses' gate, *porta Equorum*, erected by the

priests. It was through this that the horses were taken to water.

9. The Judgment gate, *porta Judicii* or *Judicialis*. It did not lead out of the city.

10. The gate of Ephraim, *porta Ephraim*, at which entered the people of the tribe of Ephraim who were going to Jerusalem.

11. The gate of Benjamin, *porta Benjamin*, which led to the country of that tribe.

12. Lastly, the gate of the Angle, *porta Anguli*, so named, because it was situated at the point where the north wall formed an angle with the west wall.

Jerusalem, at the present day, has but seven gates :—

1. Bab el Kzalil, the gate of the Beloved. It leads to the Bethlehem and Hebron road. It is by this gate that the pilgrims, who come by way of Jaffa, enter the city.

2. Bab el Nabi Dahoud, the gate of the Prophet David. It puts you in the way to Mount Sion, and is nearly facing the Hall of the Last Supper, and the tomb of David.

3. Bab el Maugrabé, gate of the Maugrabins or people of Barbary : it is also called the Dung gate. It is nearly at the angle of the ancient temple, and opposite to the village of Siloa. This gate is memorable, because it was through this that the Jews made Jesus pass when they took him to Pilate, after they had made him prisoner in the Garden of Olives. Since the invasion, this gate is kept constantly closed, as the garrison is not strong enough to allow posts to be placed every where, and the inhabitants of Siloa are strongly inclined to revolt.

4. Bab el Darahie, the Golden gate. It is to the

south, and leads to the place of the Temple. It is never opened, because, according to an ancient Turkish tradition, the Christians will, some day or other, enter Jerusalem by it, and make themselves masters of the city. It was at this gate that our Lord made his entry into Jerusalem on Palm-Sunday. The front of this gate is of handsome workmanship.

5. Bab el Sidi Mariam, Mary's gate, leading to the tomb of the Virgin. It is to the east, and faces the Mount of Olives. In all the descriptions of the Holy Land, it is called the gate of St. Stephen, because that saint passed through it when he was led forth to martyrdom. In the time of the Jews, it was the Cattle gate.

6. Bab el Zahara, the gate of the Desert: it is also called Herod's gate. It is to the north, and leads to the way to the grotto of Jeremiah. It is between St. Stephen's and the Damascus gate.

7. Bab el Hamond, or Bab el Cham, the gate of the Pillars, or of Damascus. It opens into the road to the Tombs of the Kings; to Naplouse, the ancient Sichem; to St. Jean d'Acre, and to Damascus. Simon, the Cyrenean, was coming in by this gate when he met our Saviour bearing his cross.

I pause, my dear friend, more especially on Mount Sion, that famous mount where God himself long dwelt, and which has been by turns the object of the benedictions and the lamentations of the prophets. It is a hill, whose height in respect to Jerusalem is nearly as that of Mount Aventine to the Forum at Rome. It would appear much more lofty, if we were to take its height from its base in the valley of Gehinnon. Its appearance is arid,

its colour is yellowish. There is not a mountain in the world, whose history is more gloriously, and, for a greater number of centuries, connected with that of the Christian religion and church, as the symbol and image of which it is always presented. About the year of the world 2988, David took it from the Jebusites, who, protected by a fortress, fancied themselves invincible there. He built a palace upon it, and, as it was the most glorious of his conquests, he not only fixed his residence there, but wished the city to bear its name. Solomon, his son, and the successors of that prince, dwelt there; and displayed in the establishments which they there founded a pomp and magnificence truly royal; so that every thing great and remarkable in the long series of events preceding the appearance of the Messiah is linked with the memory of Sion.

But what most enhances its honour and its glory is that the Saviour long and frequently sojourned there, that he often assembled his apostles there, that he there manifested to them his infinite power, as well as his infinite goodness, by the most soothing, as by the most awful of mysteries, and that Sion was in some measure the cradle of his church.

Of the numerous monuments which covered this hill, almost all have disappeared. The only ones of which any traces remain are :—

1. The house of Caiaphas, which I have already had occasion to mention. You have seen, in the description of the Via Dolorosa, that to this place Jesus was taken on leaving the house of Annas, and that there Peter denied him. It is now an Armenian church.

2. The tomb of David.

3. The Hall of the Last Supper. St. Helena converted it into a church, and embellished it with the most magnificent ornaments. The Saracens having, in the course of time, laid it in ruins, Sancia, queen of Sicily, by means of money, obtained its restoration to the Fathers of the Holy Land. In 1561, the Turks took possession of it, and turned it into a mosque. They are still, at the present day, its sole possessors.

Feeling a strong desire to see this memorable place, I one day told my dragoman to take all the necessary steps for that purpose. Formerly, the matter was not difficult, but it is become so since the entry of the Egyptians. My reputation of physician assisted me, and money did the rest.

On entering, you perceive on the left a small door, leading to the tomb of David, which I could not visit; no Christian being allowed to cross the threshold, let him offer ever so large a sum. The Turks, though accustomed to sell their complaisance, are inexorable on this point. Some travellers, nevertheless, assert that they have penetrated into it, and seen there three tombs hewn in a dark rock. I do not dispute this statement; for my own part, notwithstanding the popularity which I enjoy, and the protection of a number of friends, all the efforts that I made to convince myself of the fact, from personal observation, proved unavailing.

Having ascended on the same side a flight of about twenty steps, you find yourself in a large hall, the vaulted roof of which is supported by two pillars. This is the place where our Saviour held his Last Supper, and

instituted the august sacrament of his love, the holy communion.

“ And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, with desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.”

On reflecting that I was in the very place where Jesus had directed the celestial banquet to be prepared, where the beloved disciple had reposed upon his bosom, where the apostles had received the bread of life from him who was so soon to die for them and for us, where the wretch who purposed to betray him had imprudently asked if it were *he* who should be the traitor, where that miserable man had crowned his iniquity by the most heinous of sacrileges, I was touched, melted, thrilled ; I adored, I wept with love, gratitude, indignation, and horror.

But the Hall of the Last Supper is not only worthy of our respect because the first Christian passover was held there : how many other recollections not less glorious are connected with it ! It was there that, after his resurrection, Jesus more than once visited his disciples ; there that, after his ascension, he sent to them his holy spirit, which settled upon them like tongues of fire ; there that the first deacons were ordained ; and, lastly, it was from this place that the apostles, in obedience to the injunc-

tion of their divine Master, set out to “teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them;” well assured that he would be “with them alway, even unto the end of the world.”

And I—I repeat it—I was on the same spot, upon my knees, meditating on all these things, and praying with all the fervour of my heart; and the Turks who were present looked at me, without interrupting me, though I remained there long enough to tire their patience.

On retiring, they permitted me to pick up some small stones, and even appeared pleased to see that I attached some value to them.

Two hundred paces from this place are seen the ruins of the house, in which, according to tradition, the Virgin Mary died.

Opposite to Mount Sion, towards the south, is the valley of Gehinnon. It is believed that it was the laystall of ancient Jerusalem; and that a continual fire was kept up there for burning the filth and rubbish which were carried thither from all parts of the city. Beyond this valley is the Aceldama, or field of blood; and, farther on, the country adjacent to Bethlehem.

Towards the north, the wall of the city, built upon Mount Sion itself, intercepts the view of Jerusalem. It runs along, down the hill, to the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Part of Mount Sion is now a burial-place for the Catholics, Greeks, and Armenians. They have separate cemeteries. A stone covers each grave.

Farewell, my dear friend. My next letter, if I can

find time, shall make you acquainted with every thing else that appears worthy of remark in the interior of Jerusalem.

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LETTER XXXII.

POPULATION—HOUSE OF DIVES—SCENE OF THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. JAMES THE GREAT—GROTTO OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION—PRISON OF ST. PETER—HOUSE OF MARY, MOTHER OF JOHN MARK—ANCIENT CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL, BUILT BY ST. HELENA—POOL OF BETHSAIDA—INTERIOR OF JERUSALEM—QUARTER OF THE ARMENIANS—STREETS—SYNAGOGUES—JEWISH SCHOOL—JEWS.

Jerusalem, April 3rd, 1832.

I perceive, rather late perhaps, my dear friend, that I have as yet said nothing precise to you concerning the present population of Jerusalem; an omission for which I will make amends before I enter upon the details promised in my last letter.

Most geographers assign to Jerusalem only seventeen or eighteen thousand inhabitants. If I may depend on the information that I have collected on this head, and I have good reason to believe it to be correct, this city now numbers nearly twenty-one thousand inhabitants, composed of

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| Turks . . . .   | 13,000 |
| Jews . . . .    | 4,000  |
| Greeks . . . .  | 2,000  |
| Catholics . . . | 1,000  |
| Armenians . . . | 500    |
| Copts . . . .   | 60     |
|                 | <hr/>  |
|                 | 20,560 |
|                 | <hr/>  |

In this number are not included the travellers, whom curiosity or business brings to Palestine ; and, still less, that multitude of pilgrims of all nations, drawn thither by the pious wish to visit and honour the holy places.

Among the objects or places which I have not yet touched upon, those most worthy of engaging the attention or interesting the devotion of the Christian are the following :—

1. The place where Lazarus, the beggar, lay ; and the house of the rich man. This place and this house are at a very little distance from one another, in the Via Dolorosa.

“ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table : moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom : the rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.” (Luke, xvii. 19 et seq.)

This history, I know, has been considered by many as a mere parable ; but the Fathers of the church, whose

authority is of much greater weight, Tertullian, Origen, St. Irenæus, St. John Chrysostom, St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Ambrose, and others, have no doubt of its being a true history ; and tradition, which has even preserved the memory of the places, serves to confirm the correctness of this opinion.

I must confess to you, my dear friend, I frequently pass, especially during this holy season, along the Via Dolorosa ; and I never can stop before the station of the poor beggar, before the house of the rich man, without feeling poignant regret, without recollecting that I too was once a rich man, and without lamenting the bad use which I so long made of the wealth which Providence had placed in my hands, as a resource for the poor and a means of salvation for myself. Then, in the bitterness of my soul, have I implored forgiveness of God, and prayed that he would be pleased to accept, as an atonement, the voluntary poverty which I have embraced ; and to which I hope, with his grace, to adhere to my latest breath.

2. The place where St. James the Great suffered martyrdom.

On this spot now stands a convent, and one of the finest and largest churches in Jerusalem. The dome, supported by four pillars, is open at top, like that of the Holy Sepulchre. To the left is a small chapel, on the very spot, as it is believed, where the apostle was beheaded by command of Herod Agrippa. The catholics go thither to perform mass, once a year.

This church was built at the cost of the kings of Spain, for the numerous pilgrims of their nation. In the sequel



it was taken from them by the Armenians, who have retained possession of it. It is decorated with several pictures of the Greek school and some very beautiful tapestry, and adorned by a great number of lamps.

3. The house of Simon, the Pharisee.

It was to this house that Mary Magdalen repaired, when she heard that Jesus was dining there, and, throwing herself at his feet, washed them with her tears, dried them with her hair, and anointed them with an ointment which she had brought with her.

4. The grotto of the Immaculate Conception, at a little distance from the house of Simon.

It is under an ancient church, formerly belonging, as well as the monastery, to a society of nuns. Nothing is left of it but ruins ; the approach to it is horrible. One day I found very near it a camel, in a state of putrefaction, and a troop of dogs, fighting for the pieces of flesh, which they tore from it. The stench was so insupportable that I was obliged to turn back. It is an established practice in the towns and villages of the East, not to remove the bodies of animals from the places where they die : the infectious odour which they diffuse is of longer or shorter duration, according to the diligence used by the birds of prey and the dogs in devouring them.

I have already had occasion to lament with you the deplorable state of so many places at Jerusalem that are sacred for the Christians : that where our Lord was scourged ; that where he sunk, for the third time, under the weight of the cross ; and others. The Turks have turned them into receptacles of the most disgusting impurities.

### 5. The prison of St. Peter.

Here, apprehended by command of Herod Agrippa, the apostle was confined. To prevent his escape from that death which he was doomed to suffer in the presence of the people, after the feast of the Passover, the tyrant caused him to be fastened with two iron chains, and placed over him a guard of sixteen soldiers—precautions which were frustrated by a miracle of the divine protection. The angel of the Lord descended in the night, awoke the servant of Christ, broke his chains, led him forth, and, having set him at liberty, disappeared.

This prison is a small room, half in ruin. It was once enclosed in a church, dedicated to the twelve apostles, of which a few fragments only are left.

6. The house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where the Virgin Mary and many believers passed the night in prayer during Peter's imprisonment, and whither the apostle repaired after he had been delivered by the angel.

It is now a church, served by Syrian priests.

### 7. The ancient Christian hospital, built by St. Helena.

This hospital retains vestiges of the grandeur, the majesty, and the solidity, which characterize all the buildings erected by that illustrious princess. It now belongs to the Turks, who do not refuse admittance to foreigners. I visited it again the day before yesterday.

Formerly, all the Mussulmans who applied here were supplied, in honour of the prophet, with bread, pulse, and, on Friday, with rice; the dearth which has prevailed for some years has put an end to this charitable donation. Those whom curiosity draws hither are shown

eight enormous copper cauldrons, which date from the time of the foundress. One of these cauldrons, of much larger dimensions than the seven others, bears her name. I measured and found it to be one hundred and thirty-three palms in circumference.

While walking about with my dragoman, at the farthest extremity of the hospital, we perceived a Turkish tomb of recent erection. We approached it, when two women, with dishevelled hair, one having a child in her arms, ran towards us, with frightful cries and threatening gestures, and asked by what right Christians dared thus come near a Mussulman tomb. I fancied that I saw two furies. Luckily, one of them knew my dragoman, and strove to pacify the other, who looked as though she would have torn us in pieces. Still more luckily, there was no Turk near us to witness the scene.

8. The Probatic, or sheep-pool, called in Hebrew Bethesda.

This was the finest and largest in ancient Jerusalem. Here the sheep destined for sacrifice in the Temple were washed. It was surrounded by five galleries, for the reception of the sick of every sort who came thither in the hope of a cure.

“An angel,” says the evangelist, “went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.”

Here it was that Christ, seeing a man “who had an infirmity thirty-eight years,” lying on the ground, asked him if he wished to be made whole; and, on his reply

that there was no one to put him into the pool when the water was troubled, he said to him: "Rise, take up thy bed and walk;" which the impotent man instantly did.

This pool is about one hundred and fifty feet long and forty wide. It is separated from the precincts of the Temple by a thick wall only. It is now dry, partly filled up, and planted with flowers and fruit-trees. Some of the arcades are still to be seen. This is almost the only relic of the time of Solomon.

But little remains to be said, my dear friend, to give you a complete idea of Jerusalem. When once you are in it, that appearance of grandeur which strikes at a distance, that momentary illusion produced by the imposing aspect of the domes, the mosques, the minarets, overtopping the other buildings—are all over; Jerusalem appears, to a greater degree than it is in reality, a city of rubbish and ruins. Its square houses, in general small, low, without external windows, covered with a flat terraced roof, above which sometimes rises a little rotunda, look like a heap of stones piled up for the purpose of building a dwelling, rather than a dwelling itself, and produce a most melancholy effect. What are called streets are nothing but narrow, dirty lanes, most offensively irregular throughout their whole length.

The best built quarter is that of the Armenians: some cleanliness is kept up there, and there is even a certain look of comfort, which only serves to make the other parts of the city appear the more hideous:

There are three principal streets in Jerusalem.

The street of the Pillar gate, Hara Bab el Hamond,

which runs irregularly through the city from north to south ;

The Via Dolorosa, Harat el Halam, still more irregular than the preceding. It commences at the gate of St. Stephen, passes before Pilate's house, and terminates at Calvary ;

The street of the Great Bazar, Souk el Kebiz.

The other streets are much smaller. Their names are :—

The street of the Christians, Harat el Nassara, which leads from the Holy Sepulchre to the Latin convent of St. Saviour.

The street of the Turks, Harat el Muslemin.

The quarter of the Armenians, Harat el Asman, eastward of the tower of David.

The street of the Temple, Harat Bab Hotta.

The Public Quarter, Harat el Zahara, inhabited by persons of lewd life.

The quarter of the Tunisians, Harat el Maugrabé.

The number of these Tunisians is inconsiderable. It is asserted that they are descendants of the Moors expelled from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella.

Lastly, the street of the Jews, Harat el Youd, where the slaughter-houses are situated. In this quarter, one of the dirtiest in the city, the Jews assemble for religious worship. My dragoman conducted me thither, and he assured me, by the way, that they are forbidden, on the severest penalties, and even on that of death itself, to pass the church of the Holy Sepulchre — an assertion to which I could not possibly give credit.

Till the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Temple

was always the principal seat of the religious worship of the Jews. There were, nevertheless, in the city, numerous meeting-places, called synagogues, to which the people went to pray, to hear the holy Scriptures read and expounded, and to receive various instructions. In the time of Jesus Christ their number amounted, according to some writers, to four hundred and sixty. At the present day there exists but one, which is considered as the most celebrated of any in the world. I had long wished to see this famous synagogue ; yesterday I found means to gratify my curiosity.

On entering I was struck by the wretched and disgusting appearance of a place of prayer destined to receive so great a number of Jews, who throng thither from all parts of the world. It is a vast wooden edifice if one can give it that name, parted off into several divisions, some of which have no roof, while others are covered. In the centre is a shabby pulpit, in which, during religious ceremonies, is read the book of the law, kept in a chest placed at the farther end, opposite to the door, towards the east. The lamps and the benches, from their shattered state, are in perfect keeping with the deplorable condition of the whole.

The women are separated from the men ; they occupy a kind of gallery, which, I must say, looks exactly like a fowl-house, and is quite as dirty as the part appropriated to the men. The young girls are in a sort of room, cut off from all communication with the boys.

No sooner had I set foot in this dismal temple, than an old Jewess, perceiving me, exclaimed : “ Aha ! one of our people ! ” — “ Not exactly so, daughter of Abraham,”

I replied, by no means flattered by the mistake which caused her joy. The other Jewesses fell a-laughing at her blunder : they had perceived that I was a monk.

One thing which surprised me not less than the hideous wretchedness of this synagogue was the dress of the congregation assembled there. All, or nearly all, were attired more decently than I should have expected. How was it that people, so strongly attached to their religion, should bestow such pains on their dress, and not take any to keep in order and adorn a place by them reputed holy, and worthy of their highest respect ? I could not at first comprehend so strange a contrast, but a moment's reflexion enabled me to account for it by the fear which they have of appearing wealthy ; and I could not think their anxiety to conceal their riches very unreasonable in a country ruled by the despotic will of a pacha, who never perceives any thing illegal in extortion and oppression.

I had never been present at the public service of the Jews, and I had no idea how they conducted the performance. Men, women, children, sitting or standing, all pray, rocking their bodies to and fro all the while. This kind of strongly marked undulation is extremely annoying to the eye that is not accustomed to it. I had great difficulty to endure its effect.

I admired their profound respect for the Old Testament. No people entertain a higher veneration for the books that contain the doctrines, the moral laws, and the history of their religion. I felt shame for certain Christians, alas ! too numerous, in whose libraries the sacred Scriptures, frequently from indifference, some-

times from a sacrilegious combination, are placed beside an impious or an obscene book. Homer was but a man, and Alexander kept his works in a casket of costly wood, adorned with gold and precious stones. Paying less respect to the works of God himself, than pagans, who have been known to honour the Gospel with their reverence; nay, more shameless than Diderot, the atheist, and the immoral Jean Jaques, who, among their books, always gave to the Bible the place of honour; Catholics, abjuring all modesty, have gloried in making it the butt of scorn and derision, in consigning it to the abuse of the ignorant, of perverse souls, and of corrupted hearts, after having disfigured it by fathering upon it all the turpitudes of their passions and their thoughts. And then that equally frivolous and irreligious age, which saw this horrible infamy broached, which endured, which laughed at it—that age was astonished when it was overtaken by the days of malediction!

In the synagogue at Jerusalem lamps are kept continually burning before the chests containing the Holy Scriptures. These chests are numerous. In them are preserved decalogues of the highest antiquity; there is one that is considered as the oldest of all known copies. Here are also kept great numbers of complete Old Testaments, for the use of the Jews already settled in the city, or for such as throng thither every year.

The Jews resident in Jerusalem are mostly of foreign extraction. Many of them are descended from wealthy parents, who came from the different countries, through which their nation is scattered, to end their days in Palestine. Most of those whom the same motive still



continues to draw thither are rich, and bring with them considerable sums. The Fathers of the Holy Land find among them most serviceable resources, when the usual alms are delayed, as was the case, for instance, at the time of the invasion of the Peninsula by the French. I have no need to remark that their advances are by no means gratuitous: they are paid for at a dear, a very dear rate, it is true; but, at least, the borrowers contrive with this assistance to escape the rage of tyranny, to save their lives, and in time the charity of Europe comes and enables them to discharge the debt.

These easy circumstances of the Jewish families allow them to dress with more decency, and even with greater elegance, than the other classes of the inhabitants: this circumstance strikes you more particularly on the Saturday. The women, on that day, display a sort of luxury, though, like the Turkish females, they never appear in public otherwise than veiled. For the rest there are no women in Jerusalem who go with their faces uncovered, excepting those of foreign nations who come thither on pilgrimage.

The Jews of this country have been represented by some writers in a light that seems to me absolutely false. It is true that here, as every where else, they retain that characteristic type which distinguishes them from all the people in the world; that seal, that stamp, which neither time nor climate can efface; it is true that at Jerusalem the Jew is still a Jew, and there, too, interest is his idol; he has expatriated himself to come and die there: in order that, after death, he may be laid beneath a few stones in the valley of Jehoshaphat, he has left the

country in which he was born, his home, his relatives, his friends ; with his eyes fixed on the spot where stood the Temple, he deplores its ruin, and sheds floods of tears over the destruction of the holy city and the dispersion of his nation ; and, with a heart yet heaved by sighs, with eyes yet dim with tears, he is ready to lend, at exorbitant interest, to him who unfortunately is forced to have recourse to his purse.

But, on the other hand, it must be confessed that the Jews of Jerusalem are in general well educated and not deficient in attainments : they understand several languages ; almost all of them speak Spanish and Italian. The school, in their synagogue, though inferior to that which they have at Tiberias, which is the most celebrated of all, is directed by masters who devote themselves with zeal to the instruction of the youth committed to their care. They treat their pupils with the more severity, because they conceive that, in so doing, they are conforming with the precepts of the Bible. When I visited the boys' school, I was struck to see a little urchin, seven or eight years old, tied with a cord, and receiving the bastinado on the soles of the feet. The poor fellow groaned deeply, but without crying, as children generally do. I immediately solicited his pardon, through my dragoman. It was willingly granted by the master. Notwithstanding the severity of the discipline and the incessant studies to which they are kept, all these boys have a cheerful look. The parents, and even the children, have a certain politeness in their manners, which form a singular contrast with those of the inhabitants belonging to other nations.

I have never seen a Jew asking charity ; I have never seen one covered with the rags of wretchedness, which are but too frequently met with among the Arabs and the Christians ; and this is owing less to the relief which the poor receive from the rich, or from that which foreign synagogues transmit to their indigent brethren, than to activity and industry. The Jew is a stranger to that slothful fondness for rest, so common among the people of the Levant, whose indolent and useless life is the principal cause of indigence. The Jew employs himself ; he spreads out, sometimes upon a tottering stone, wares, of such small value, that you are utterly astonished that he can hope to derive any profit from them ; but, should he even sell no more than will enable him to procure a morsel of bread, that appears to him preferable to the shame which he would feel in holding out his hand. There are Jews of all trades, of all professions : my tinman is a Jew. As I have occasion for a good many tin boxes and cases, to hold valuable objects, I see him frequently ; and his assiduity, his indefatigable activity, always fill me with fresh surprise.

A quality, peculiar here to this class of persons, is a civility, which forms a singular contrast with the rude, uncouth behaviour of the other inhabitants. Have you lost your way ? are you seeking a street ? — a Jew, be sure, will offer to conduct you ; he will even accompany you for a considerable distance ; and, too proud to ask for pay, too fond of gain to make an absolute sacrifice of it, when you have reached the place to which you are going, he will look at your hand, he will cast an eye at your pocket—if you choose to take the hint, well and good.

Do not imagine, however, that, in the Jew, one quality or virtue is a pledge or guarantee for another quality, another virtue: you would run the risk of being deceived, in commerce, at least. Have you any purchase to make? go to the bazaar; it is spacious, and well stocked with every thing. You will find it so full of people, especially at the time when the pilgrims are at Jerusalem, that you will scarcely be able to walk through it. You will there find linens and silks from France, woollens from Germany, articles of jewelry, and, generally, whatever you can want; but, be upon your guard, if you would avoid the danger of paying twice as much for goods as they are worth, when sold at a fair profit.

At this moment, the Jews of Jerusalem are building the fondest hopes on the new revelation, which seems likely to subject Palestine, and perhaps all Syria, to the sway of Egypt. They consider Mehemet Ali as destined to rescue them from slavery, and to ensure them brighter prospects. This might turn out to be a mistake: \* the wily pacha is not yet master of Acre; he knows not what line of conduct the Porte will adopt in regard to him; it is, consequently, his interest to flatter all parties, all creeds, all nations; and this he can do marvellously well. The Christians, themselves, laugh in their sleeve at these events: they no longer pay taxes, and imagine that it will be always thus.

\* When I was writing this at Jerusalem, I was far from thinking that the Jews of that city were threatened with a catastrophe so speedy and so terrible as that which I have recorded in a note attached to Letter XXV., on the authority of a letter, dated July 16th, 1834. Still less did I suspect that it would be from the Arabs, among whom they live, that the Jews, "insulted, plundered, slaughtered, would chiefly have to suffer." I have said, and I again repeat it: "I see but too clearly that the desolation continues."

This illusion of the Christians is infinitely more astonishing than that of the Jews. The latter, hated by all nations, debased, despised, humiliated, persecuted, have a real need to hope ; they cannot live but on hope ; and, it is true, still more in this respect than in that of the love of money, as I remarked above, that the Jew is still a Jew. Obligated to submit to the most terrible punishment that ever befel a guilty people, and stubbornly resolved not to acknowledge his crime, he would cease to be of his religion, if he were to cease to expect. Hence, look at him in history, look at him at the present day : always disappointed, he still continues to hope.

Let any intriguer whatever give himself out for the Messiah, he will start up, welcome him with transport, proclaim him at once the GREAT DELIVERER, and, in the delirium of his enthusiasm, he already beholds the holy city shaking off the enormous weight of the ruins of ages which crush her, and rising before his face in new glory. One only Messiah was, and could be, the true Messiah ; he who had been promised to the first man, after his fall ; he whose coming the prophets had never ceased to foretel to Israel ; he who was to be born, and who actually was born of a virgin ; and, of all the Messiahs of whom mention is made in the annals of the last eighteen centuries, he is the only one whom the Jew has denied. To all the impostors who have usurped that illustrious name he has prostituted his faith, his treasures, his blood, his life ; and, were occasion to offer, he would prostitute them again. In vain, since the anathema pronounced against Jerusalem, does the divine justice continue, from age to age, to manifest itself in the

strokes which it inflicts ; in vain does it visibly raise up, from time to time, new agents of its vengeance, to disperse, pillage, slaughter, destroy, and to leave no other trace of guilty Jerusalem but the ground on which it stands — the ground remains ; that is enough to authorize hope ! Alas ! the hapless Jew hath eyes, but he sees not ; ears, but he hears not ; understanding, but he comprehends not. This has been foretold to him : these are the words of Him, whose words shall never pass away.

The sceptre was not to pass from Judah, until Shiloh, the wished-for by the nations, should come. He who said this, who gave this warning seventeen centuries beforehand, to his posterity, was the patriarch, the father of the twelve tribes, honoured by them as a prophet, by whose lips God himself spake. Where is now this sceptre ? in what hands ? Does there still exist a Hebrew people collected together into a nation ? Has this nation a territory, a government ? Where are they ? Where is the public authority ? Where are its magistrates, its tribunals ?—“ No matter.”

Temple, altar, sacrifice, are they not all gone ? are they not all destroyed ? And, upon these grand ruins, has not the confusion of the tribes stamped the seal of divine justice ?—“ No matter.”

Where are at this day the sons of Aaron, the sons of Levi, the only legitimate ministers of the Jewish priesthood, the only lawful servants of the tabernacle and the temple, the only persons having a right to touch the censer, to offer to God the blood of the victims, and to enter the holy of holies ?—“ No matter.”

And what is become of Judah? How would the Messiah, who is to descend from him, prove his origin, if he were still to come? How would he get himself acknowledged for his son?—"No matter."

Why this silence of the prophets? They were destined, from age to age, to remind the nations of Him who was to come to save and to reign over them. In vain you listen—the voice of Jehovah, which transmitted his oracles to them, is mute, mute for ever.—"No matter."

No matter!—Yes, it matters much.

"Well, then," the Talmud says, "Cursed be he who computes the days of the Messiah!"

Such is the last word with the Jew.

And this curse, which threatens any one who shall dare to compute, is sufficient to deter him who is not affrighted by eighteen hundred years of malediction, the cause of which he is the only one to misapprehend! And his mind, obstinately refusing to look back, continues to pursue a future that always escapes him, the while his disappointed hope becomes with him nothing more than a new motive for hoping on! And, amidst all the elements of ruins which act upon his existence, which undermine it, which, according to the natural and ordinary course, ought to blend him with the nations among whom he dwells, and, finally, to sweep away his very name, as that of so many nations which figured on the stage of the world, has been swept away, he lives, he preserves his distinctive character, he remains a Jew, by a miracle of justice, which he takes for a miracle of mercy, and which authorizes him to continue to hope.

He perceives not that he exists much less for his own sake than for the sake of others ; that he is there, carefully keeping and guarding, but as a blind man, the books in which is written the degree of his condemnation, to show it to every one who chooses to read it ; like, let me tell him, a criminal who, by the sentence of his judges, is to be conducted to the place of ignominy, where he has deserved to live, carrying before him a label, inscribed with the judgment, which he alone cannot see, but which strikes the eye of every passenger !

What a strange people !

Jerusalem is, at this moment, thronged with pilgrims of all nations, attracted thither by the approaching solemnities. Most of them are poor, ill clad, and come from infected countries. If we escape the plague, it will be miraculous. The mere idea of the risks we run makes one shudder, and I perceive that the alarm is extending to all persons who reflect. I am, nevertheless, resigned ; and, not only does my faith support me, but it shows me a real happiness in dying on the spot where Jesus my Saviour expired. Then do I exclaim with Tasso :—

Chi sia di noi esser sepolto schivi  
Ove i membri di Dio fur già sepulti !\*

and I adore the blessed will of God. These holy places have, moreover, such a charm for me, that I cannot tell, especially at this moment, whether I should not determine to stay and defy the disease. Already, though my departure is still far distant, I feel an indescribable oppression of heart ; how will it be when the hour has arrived ?

\* “ Which of us would refuse to be buried where the body of the incarnate God was buried ! ”



Farewell, my dear friend. To-morrow I remove to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, where I shall pass the last fortnight of Lent. I shall not fail to write to you.

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## LETTER XXXIV.

SECLUSION IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE — CELL — GALLERY — PILGRIMS — WINDING-SHEETS DISTRIBUTED BY THE ARMENIAN PRIESTS — TURKS AT THE DOOR OF THE CHURCH — CRUEL MODE OF PRESERVING ORDER — PALM-SUNDAY — PROCESSION OF THE CATHOLICS; OF THE ARMENIANS — WEDNESDAY IN PASSION-WEEK — OFFICE OF THE DARKNESS — MAUNDY-THURSDAY — SOLEMN MASS — PROCESSION — FOOT-WASHING — GOOD-FRIDAY — THE DOOR OF THE CHURCH FORCED BY THE GREEK AND ARMENIAN PILGRIMS — DINNER OF THE COMMUNITY — DARKNESS — PROCESSION TO CALVARY — SOLEMN SERVICE ON HOLY-SATURDAY — CONTRAST BETWEEN THE CATHOLICS AND THE GREEKS — NIGHT BETWEEN HOLY-SATURDAY AND EASTER-SUNDAY — ASSEMBLAGE OF TEN THOUSAND PILGRIMS — EASTER-SUNDAY.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre, April 23, 1832.

On Saturday, the day before Palm-Sunday, I entered the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Every nook and corner of the buildings occupied by the Fathers of the Holy Land were crowded with monks of the monastery of St. Saviour, who are accustomed to come with the Father warden every week in Lent, to pass the night between Saturday and Sunday, and to remain here the last four days of the Passion week.

The cell in which I have been placed has no window : it receives no light but by the door, and, as this door opens into the gallery which is rather dark, I am obliged to burn a candle continually, even at noon-day. Of course I shut myself up there as little as possible.

My furniture consists of a bed, a broken table, and a

chair ; and this latter article I had a good deal of trouble to procure.

The gallery leading to my cell is upwards of two hundred paces in length, and of proportionate width. Facing it is the Holy Sepulchre, from which it is but twenty feet distant, or thereabout. A special permission is required to tarry in it ; but this the Fathers never refuse. I pass almost all my time there, and very happily. I walk, read the service, and say my prayers there ; and, frequently, leaning over the parapet, I enjoy in silence the felicity of contemplating the spot where the body of Jesus was buried, or I survey with emotion the crowd of pilgrims thronging thither, and undulating — a living flood—around the sacred tomb.

The noise caused by the incessantly increasing influx during the past fortnight, and the continual singing of the Christians of various nations, who successively repair to the church to perform the service, render it almost impossible to get any rest. Your sleep, when you can sleep, is unquiet, disturbed, and broken twenty times in an hour. To this inconvenience is to be added the dampness of the buildings, which alone would seem sufficient cause to keep away from them : but piety deems itself happy to dwell there, and the delightful feelings which it there experiences leave no room for any other consideration.

The moment when my soul most enjoys itself near the tomb of our Saviour is that hour of the night when the Franciscan Fathers come to it to recite their service. The crowd of pilgrims has then retired ; even those who have obtained special permissions keep aloof : so that, for

more than an hour, I can pray, adore, enjoy, alone, without molestation, and without disturbance. Afterwards I visit Calvary, and the other sacred places enclosed within the monastery, and there I frequently tarry till day-break.

I was returning, the other day, from Golgotha, when, on approaching the Holy Sepulchre, I saw some Armenian priests engaged in cutting, by the light of the lamps, pieces of white linen cloth into stripes of a certain length. These they laid upon the sacred tomb, pronounced a blessing over them, wrote upon each some words in their own language, and then distributed them among the pilgrims, who received them with great reverence. I could not comprehend either the object or the aim of this ceremony : though it strongly excited my curiosity, I durst not disturb the devotion of the actors in it by soliciting an explanation. But, presently afterwards, perceiving at the door of the church some of those who had participated in the distribution made by the priests, I asked them a few questions, and learned that what I had seen offered and received with such piety, with such religious reverence, was . . . a shroud !

A shroud ! and the poor pilgrims appeared more delighted to carry home with them this garment of death than ever was ambitious man, driven by the desire of wealth across the seas, when, after a long exile, he returns to his country, laden with treasures : this was to be for each of them, when the last hour should arrive, a pledge of peace and blessing.

I went back to my cell, reflecting on the scene which I had beheld, and, full of the thoughts which it sug-

gested, I could not help acknowledging that, for the man who feels that he is *mortal*, it was fraught with a grand and salutary lesson. To me it appeared scarcely possible to contemplate a shroud, to attach an importance to its possession, to look at that which is to cover our remains without its exercising a powerful influence upon our moral actions. More than once, indeed, in the world in which I lived but too long, I have met with pretended sages, on whom a shroud would, at the moment, have made no impression. These would have shrugged their shoulders with pity, at the mere idea of a pilgrim leaving his country to travel hither, to see nothing but a tomb, to fetch nothing but a winding-sheet. But then wealth, the flower of life, robust health, and the sophistries of an entirely pagan philosophy, caused them to forget that they were born but to die and to pass to another world, whither they should carry none of those things to which their shallow wisdom gave the preference. And if they have not already been overtaken by nights of pain, of anguish, of agony, when they do come, what will be left them? — a shroud! a shroud, whose lessons they will probably be sorry that they have not learned! a shroud, meaner perhaps and poorer than that of the Armenian, whose folly they had deplored!

It is the Turks, as I have told you in one of my former letters, (Letter XV.) who keep the keys of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and sell to pilgrims permission to enter. For this fortnight past, ten or twelve of them have been continually on guard at the door; while some of them, seated on a divan, are calmly smoking their pipes, the others stand sentry, armed with whips, which

they brandish over the heads of the pilgrims, and which they sometimes apply with such violence as to cover with blood those who would force their way in without paying tribute. This distressing sight I have but too often before my eyes ; and I never witness it without being as painfully affected by it as I was the very first time. I must admit that, among the crowd thronging to the church, there are many sailors from the islands of the Archipelago and Greece — men of rough demeanour and ardent disposition, who require keeping in order by severity ; otherwise it would be impossible that the religious ceremonies, successively performed by each of the different nations, could be peaceably and decently solemnized. But the violence, not to say the cruelty of the means employed to preserve order—the arm of a Turk, uplifted over the head of a Christian, whose only crime, after all, is excessive impatience to approach the tomb of his Saviour—this fills me with profound grief ; this rends and revolts my heart.

The day before yesterday, I retired with a soul so afflicted by what I had seen in passing this church, that I could not help going to relieve my heart by communicating to one of our good Fathers the painful feelings which I experienced. “ Alas ! ” said he, lifting his eyes towards heaven, “ alas ! ‘ Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore, is she removed . . . . . The Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up.’ \* Let us not deceive ourselves, Father,” he continued ; “ let us not seek elsewhere, but in the sins committed by the Christians, especially in the Holy Land,

\* Lament. Jerem. c. 1.

the cause of the mortification we endure to see the holy places in the hands of the enemies of Christ. They are the instruments by which God punishes our iniquities, our ingratitude." Then, taking a rapid review of the principal traits in the conduct of the Christians, in the years which followed their triumphs in Palestine, he thus proceeded:—

"While Godfrey, the honour and glory of the Crusades, not less by his piety than by his valour, and his brother Baldwin, equally celebrated for his courage and his zeal for the faith, reigned at Jerusalem, the Lord, who had blessed their arms, was pleased to bestow the favours of his mercy on the new state subjected to their authority; but those who succeeded them did not tread in their noble steps. The Christian army soon plunged into the most frightful disorders; the scandal, in a short time, attained its highest pitch. It became so great that William, archbishop of Tyre, who had undertaken to write the history of that period, had not the courage to continue it. 'The counsels of wisdom,' said he, 'the law of the priesthood, the words of the prophets, are fled; these words of Isaiah are verified in the moral sense, in regard to this people: — The whole head is sick, and the heart is afflicted; from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, there is no sound place in it.'

"With a deplorable corruption of manners were combined enmities, rivalries, discord, intestine dissensions, which drew upon this country all the scourges of the divine wrath. Fifteen towns, among others Ptolemais, an impregnable fortress, fell, in consequence of these divisions, into the hands of the Saracens. Thousands of

Christians, who had polluted this land by their abominations, perished by water, by the sword, or by fire, till at last the conquest of Godfrey disappeared along with the sad remnant of the conquerors. God is not to be defied with impunity; and when it is Christians who are guilty of such excess, they are the more severely punished for it: they know better what they do.

“ You feel indignant, as well you may,” he continued, “ that the crowd should be kept off with a sort of cruelty, and especially that it should be Turks who treat it in this manner. But, before I tell you all I think on this subject, you must admit with me, that it is not since yesterday, but for ages, that the Mussulman has been commissioned by the Most High to chastise the sinful Christian people. God, who is not frightened at the number of the guilty, gives up to him a whole nation as one man to be punished when it deserves it: look at Greece! On the other hand, do you not perceive something providential in this disposition, which has placed disciples of Mahomet at the door of a Christian temple, and makes them serve as ushers to introduce the disciples of Jesus Christ to their divine master? The Turks, you will tell me, in so doing, have an eye only to the money. But is it for aught else that the servant acts as usher to his master, and the grandee himself very often to his prince? All things are instruments in the hands of God.

“ But, to make you thoroughly acquainted with my sentiments—no doubt, among the thousands of pilgrims attracted by the religious solemnities, the greater number have undertaken so long a journey, amid so many perils, merely from motives of faith and love, in order to

worship Christ on the spot where he suffered, where he died for us. Still, how many are here this day who seem to have come to Jerusalem solely to renew the crimes and the disorders which have so frequently drawn upon it the wrath of Heaven ! Have you not seen in this venerable church, almost at the foot of Calvary, but a few paces from the sacred tomb, Christians forget that it is written : ‘ My house is a house of prayer, and ye have made it a den of thieves ? ’ Is it not Christians who have set up those tables, who buy, who sell, who have turned the most sacred spot on earth into a place of traffic, and hold a vile market in it ? A thousand times more guilty than the profaning Jews whom Jesus drove out of the Temple, regardless of the seal of redemption with which they are marked, do they not defy the anathema of religion, and the warnings of piety, which is afflicted and alarmed at their conduct ? And are you still astonished, Father, that God should chastise, should humble, that he leaves the whip in the hands of the Mussulman, and does not take from him the custody of his sanctuary ! The punishment, the humiliation, are but too well deserved ! ”

I could not deny that the good monk was right. I had seen, with my own eyes, things more deplorable than he had mentioned, things which my pen dares not detail ; a hideous medley of superstitious practices, of dances, accompanied with yells, with ferocious cries, the bare idea of which excites horror. Happily, Heaven be praised, the Catholics were not implicated in this scandal ; it was the Greeks and Armenians only who had taken part in it.



It is unfortunate for the Catholics that their Easter now and then happens at the same time as that of the Schismatic Christians : that was the case this year. The concourse is then so great, that it is no uncommon thing to see persons squeezed to death. Besides, the different ceremonies which those various denominations can only perform successively, are never celebrated with so much regularity and decency, and there is no way to obviate the inconveniences thence resulting, or to prevent accidents. One thing, however, is remarkable, namely, that, notwithstanding this immense concourse of strangers from the Morea, the Archipelago, Constantinople, Russia, Armenia, Natolia, Egypt, Syria, &c., you never hear of any theft or robbery : it may even be asserted that amidst so many pilgrims the most valuable articles are perfectly safe.

On Palm-Sunday commenced the religious ceremonies, held in commemoration of the last mysteries of infinite mercy, accomplished in Jerusalem in the course of this week, to which the church has so justly given the epithet of *great*. The Franciscan Fathers, the Catholics, who had come on pilgrimage, those of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the environs, repaired early to the church. Several Mahometans had mingled with the crowd, and were remarkable for an air of curiosity and respect. Near the altar, set up at the door of the Holy Sepulchre, lay a heap of palm branches, brought the preceding day, according to custom, from the neighbourhood of Gaza. The Father warden, with mitre and crosier, to which, as I have told you, he is entitled by virtue of his office, and covered with a magnificent purple cope ; and the priests, who

assisted him in sacerdotal habits of the greatest beauty, advanced at a slow pace towards the altar, and the singers struck up the *Hosanna Filio David*, which the people repeated with the warmest devotion.

Meanwhile, the reverend Father who officiated blessed the palms: he then took one for himself, adorned with flowers, so wreathed as to form at top the pontifical crown, and gave one, nearly similar, to the Father Procuratore. He afterwards distributed a number of others among the monks and the principal catholics. I had the honour to receive from his hands a very handsome branch, six feet high, which I hope to bring back with me to Europe, and which I shall preserve as one of the favourite memorials of my pilgrimage.

The remaining palms were distributed among the numerous congregation, by which they were received with religious eagerness. Notwithstanding the precautions taken by the good Fathers, it is rarely the case that enough are provided to satisfy the piety of all; and it too frequently happens that those who cannot obtain a share vent their dissatisfaction in loud complaints, or even in violent quarrels. Fortunately, on this occasion, nothing of that kind took place to interrupt or disturb this touching ceremony.

After the benediction and the distribution of the palms, the Father who performed the functions of deacon gave the signal by these words, pronounced in a loud voice:— *Procedamus in pace* — “Let us go in peace” — and the procession immediately began to move. It went thrice round the Holy Sepulchre in perfect order. The magnificence of the ornaments, the harmony of the singing,

the devotion of the congregation, the gravity and modesty of the monks, all concurred to produce a lively and powerful impression ; but nothing so deeply touched my soul as the thoughts awakened within me by the chanting of the following words, which express, with such admirable simplicity, the triumph of Jesus when entering Jerusalem : — *Pueri Hebræorum &c.* — “ The children of the Jews took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried Hosanna in the highest ! ”

I could not dwell upon the idea that I was there, on the very spot, perhaps, where had stood one of those *children of the Jews*, carrying like them in my hand a palm-branch, brought from the same place, shouting like them, saying like them : — “ Hosanna in the highest ! Hosanna to the Son of David ! ” treading like them in the footsteps of the Saviour — I could not, I say, dwell upon this idea, without a feeling of tender, lively, and profound gratitude to my God.

Formerly, in order to give a still more accurate representation of the triumphal procession of Jesus Christ, all the Fathers of St. Francis went to Bethphage. On their arrival there, the Father warden dispatched two of the monks to the place which tradition points out as the spot whither Christ sent two of his disciples, saying : “ Go into the village over against you,” &c. The monks brought back a she-ass with her colt. Then, throwing their garments on the back of the animal, they placed the most reverend Father upon it, and thus led him to the city by a road which the attendant catholics strewed with leaves of the palm or olive-tree, loudly singing : Hosanna ! In this manner the procession

reached Jerusalem, passing through the gate by which Christ entered the city. The principal reason for the discontinuance of this ceremony is, that it cost a considerable sum to obtain the pacha's permission ; and, for some time past, the small amount of the donations from Europe prevents the Fathers from giving to Mussulman greediness so much as it would demand.

The procession was followed by the mass, which was performed with great solemnity. Were I here to repeat to you, my friend, all that my preceding letters have told you of the lively, soothing, tender, sad, painful, heart-rending impressions produced in me by the sight of the most holy places in Palestine, I could not convey to you any idea of the emotions which overpowered my soul, while the *passion* was chanted in the very tomb of our divine Saviour. No language can express them ; and it is not sufficient to have a heart, you must be at Jerusalem, in the church, in presence of that tomb, in order to feel them.

After the procession of the catholics, I had an opportunity of seeing that of the Armenians. Considered merely with reference to the splendour of the sacerdotal ornaments and the number of the persons, it presented a more remarkable scene than that which I had attended. It was certainly a magnificent sight that this immense multitude of Christians displayed, bearing the tall palms beneath which they were hidden, and thus exhibiting the appearance of a moving forest, gradually changing its ground, and affording a view, at intervals, of bishops glittering with silver and gold, priests arrayed in richly embroidered garments, and young Levites sending up

into the air the smoke of incense and other perfumes. But, in spite of this outward pomp, what a difference in all that concerns the regularity of the procession, the gravity of the chanting, the majesty of the ceremonies, the piety of the congregation, the dignity of the priests, the modesty, the devotion, of the monks, &c. The Mussulmans themselves were so struck with it, that several of them have been heard to say, that if they could believe that their religion is not the true one, they would not hesitate to turn catholics. Of the service of the Greeks and the Armenians they speak only with contempt.

Holy-Wednesday, the anniversary of the day on which the Jews held council upon the means by which they might make themselves masters of the person of Jesus, and deliver him up to Pilate, is considered by the churches of the East as a day of stations. At three in the morning, the Fathers of the Holy Land went to the grotto of Gethsemane, where our Lord sweated blood, and was seized through the treachery of Judas. It requires a special permission for laymen and strangers to enter it with them. From half past three till seven, they performed eight masses; after which they recited prime, tierce, and sexte. Agreeably to a custom, already very ancient, a Spanish monk chanted the solemn mass. The station concluded with the litanies of the Blessed Virgin; and the Fathers returned to the monastery.

At three in the afternoon, the monks of St. Saviour assembled in the church, and, having taken their seats on benches placed before the Holy Sepulchre, they commenced the service of *the Darkness*, according to the

Romish liturgy. This service, which is of very high antiquity, has such a resemblance in its arrangement to that of *the Dead*, that it cannot fail to remind one of the latter. Without invitatory, without hymn, without benediction, it is stamped with a particular character, which excites in the soul feelings of deep sadness ; while, on the other hand, most of the psalms, the prophecies, and the lessons which compose the different parts of it, at the same time that they touch and melt the heart, elevate, expand, and console it.

The office of the Darkness, on Holy-Wednesday, opens with the chanting of the second psalm :—

“ Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing ?

“ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,

“ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords far from us.

“ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh ; the Lord shall have them in derision.

“ Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

..... “ Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth ! ”

Is it not a strange thing, my dear friend, a thing that must produce astonishment not less than admiration, to hear such words around that very tomb into which the hatred of the raging people precipitated its victim, thinking to bury him there for ever ? And when one considers that these words were written some thousands of

years ago, quite close to this tomb, by a king of Jerusalem ; when it is after eighteen hundred years of useless leagues and plots, that one hears them resounding on the same spot, like a shout of triumph ; when one has lived one's self in an age of iniquity, when the efforts to break and to cast off the yoke of the Lord and his Christ have been more violent, more obstinate, more artful, than those of all preceding ages, and yet quite as vain ; when, like me, one has witnessed the last leagues, the last plots ; when one has seen the rulers of the earth bent on putting an end to the worship of the Most High, and how the Lord has laughed at their designs, and spoken to them in his wrath—then say, my friend, if it is possible to suppress those feelings which seize the soul, which sway, transport, and ravish it.

After this astonishing succession of thoughts and emotions, so rapid and so various, produced by the psalms of the office of the Darkness, it would seem at first, that the powers of the soul must be in a manner exhausted, and that, wholly absorbed, it could not be susceptible of any feeling more intense, more sad, more soothing. Yet what a new, what a still more energetic and more powerful action is soon exercised upon it, by the *Lamentations* of the most touching of the prophets of Israel, whose moanful complaints the Church associates with the canticles of David !

It was a very ancient custom with the Hebrews to deplore, in funeral songs, public and private misfortunes ; the death of kings, princes, warriors, heroes, or great calamities, inflicted by Heaven upon the Jewish cities and nation. Several instances of this kind are to be

found in the prophets; nay, it is very rarely that the denunciation of the evils with which they threaten the people is not followed by complaints of this sort, or by songs of lamentation on the fate of those who are about to be visited with the chastisements of Heaven. But, by the gravity of his effusions or predictions; by the excessive grief which he expresses; by the vehemence and energy of his lamentations; by the feeling which animates the most trivial of his phrases; by the beauty, the grandeur, of the images; by the truth of the delineations; by the compassion, the pity, the terror, the hope, which they excite — Jeremiah seizes more forcibly upon the soul than any of the others, stirs it, troubles it, terrifies it, softens it, afflicts it, casts it down, raises it up, soothes it, and, without any of those ingenious means which art furnishes, and which rather betray the weakness than reveal the talent of man, hurries it, in some measure, along with him, whithersoever he is himself carried by inspiration, and transports it into all those states, all those situations, through which the divine spirit, whose organ he is, has caused him to pass.

And if this is the case every where, under what circumstances soever one reads or listens to Jeremiah, consider what must be the effect when, on the anniversary of the greatest crimes and the greatest calamities of Jerusalem, you find yourself on the spot where, his “eye running down with water,” that prophet seated himself and poured forth his lamentations, sighing in the bitterness of his soul; when you hear him, as it were, lifting up his voice and crying: “How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she



that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary ! She weepeth sore in the night, and the tears are on her cheeks ! among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her."

Is it possible, my good friend, to suppress our sighs, to restrain our tears, at so heart-rending a picture of that city, once the queen of nations, now sitting forlorn, in affliction and widowhood ; forsaken by her friends, betrayed by her kindred, stretching out her hands in vain, and finding none who deigns to comfort her !

And what images again for him, who at this day sees here at Jerusalem what the prophet saw, "the ways of Zion that mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts ; those priests who sigh, those virgins who are afflicted, those gates destroyed, and herself in bitterness ; her adversaries prevailing over her, and her children gone into captivity before the enemy."

O how much more quickly and painfully does this cry so tender, so piercing, penetrate to the recesses of the heart : "All ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."

Admirable song of lamentation, in which is written, under the dictation of the holy spirit, the history of the wrath of God against backsliding nations ; in which rulers and subjects, who have transgressed against the supreme Majesty, may learn that those to whom they attribute the strokes which alight upon them are merely the instruments of the anger of that great God who himself smites, and chastises, and punishes, through them.

At the conclusion of the *Darkness*, first, the officiating Father and then the other monks give a signal, by striking upon the benches with their books; and, in a moment, as with us in Europe, the boys in the church, or kept at the door, deafen us with rattles and other instruments with which they are provided, and then go to make the same racket before the houses of the catholics.

This clatter, to which more than one signification is attached in the western Church, is here generally interpreted as a memorial of the earthquake, the crash of the rocks, and the convulsion of nature, at the death of Jesus Christ.

Holy-Thursday, the anniversary of the institution of the Lord's Supper and the foot-washing, is more particularly designated in Palestine by the appellation of *the day of the Mysteries*. Kept by the whole catholic universe, and especially by the eastern Church, till the period when the special festival of Corpus Christi was established, it is still celebrated at Jerusalem with more pomp than anywhere else in the world.

On that day the church was decorated as for the greatest solemnities. The concourse of catholics from Jerusalem and Bethlehem, of pilgrims, of curious spectators, Armenian or Mahometan, was still more considerable than on Palm-Sunday: and every one strove to get nearest to the sacred tomb.

The solemn mass began at nine o'clock. The officiating Father, and the priests who assisted him at the altar, were attired in garments of black velvet, set off by embroidery in gold, of such beauty that I do not recollect to have ever seen any thing richer and more magnificent.

No other dresses than these were worn during the last three days of the Passion week. They were a present, I was told, from an archbishop of Valence, who paid ninety thousand francs for them.

When mass was over, six monks, dressed in copes glistening with gold and silver, went to receive beneath a magnificent canopy the most reverend Father warden, who brought in great pomp the holy sacrament to the sepulchre. Ranged in two rows, the Fathers of the Holy Land, and after them the congregation, accompanied him, carrying torches, singing hymns, and manifesting by a slow and respectful pace, and by deep devotion, the firmest faith and the warmest gratitude for the august mystery. In this manner the procession went thrice round the Holy Sepulchre, and then stopped at the door. The officiating priest, followed by the others, entered; the interior was lighted by a great number of tapers and lamps; he deposited the host in a portable tabernacle of silver, of beautiful workmanship and great value, placed on the marble slab which covers the Sepulchre; and, after adoring it for some moments, he went forth, and on the threshold began singing the vespers of the day, and the altars in the church were meanwhile stripped.

The host is left thus upon the tomb till the service of the following day. During the intermediate time, two Fathers come successively to pass an hour there in adoration. Admittance is refused to laymen, and even to pilgrims who are not ecclesiastics.

At half-past two, the foot-washing took place. This ceremony, which commemorates in so touching a manner the deep humiliation of our Saviour, is performed at the

door of the Holy Sepulchre with great solemnity. Twelve monks had been appointed beforehand to represent the twelve apostles ; I had the happiness to be one of them. Assisted by a deacon and a sub-deacon, the most reverend Father warden, dressed in an alb, came to us, and, kneeling down, washed our feet with water which he took from a silver basin. He wiped them, made the sign of the cross upon them with his thumb, humbly kissed them, and then gave to each a small crucifix of mother-of-pearl, as a memorial.

I had formed the design of washing on that day the feet of twelve poor persons, at the same hour and in the same place where our Lord had performed that office for his disciples ; and for this purpose to go to the hall of the Last Supper. I expected to meet with the less difficulty, as my dragoman and I were acquainted with the owner, and I hoped that money would accomplish the rest. To my great regret, he came and told me that he could not grant the favour which I solicited, and that if I had not already visited the hall of the Last Supper, I should have been obliged to make up my mind to leave Jerusalem without seeing it. “ The Egyptian government,” he added, in a positive tone, “ has given me the most precise orders on this subject.” It would not have been prudent to express dissatisfaction or to complain : I insisted no further. Besides, I had been present at a very animated conversation between him and an officer of the pacha’s on the same subject, which gave me reason to think that my Turk told the truth.

At half-past three, as on the preceding day, the Fathers came and chanted the service of the Darkness at the

entrance of the Holy Sepulchre. Again I heard the prophetic voice of David relating the passion of the Saviour making atonement for the sins of men ; again I heard the plaintive accents of Jeremiah, which the nakedness of the church, stripped of all its ornaments, rendered still more melancholy ; and again my tears flowed abundantly.

It is a rule, confirmed by long custom, for the Latin Fathers not to give up the sanctuaries to the professors of the schismatic creeds till the conclusion of the offices, that is to say, till the host has been removed from the Holy Sepulchre. Till then the church is kept shut. This year, a serious altercation had arisen between the Armenians and the Greeks ; and the latter, accustomed to pick a quarrel with the Catholics, had not been sparing of abuse of the latter, though they had not interfered at all in the dispute. As this state of things excited some apprehensions for the following day, the Turkish police kept a strict watch at the door, with a view to prevent disturbance.

On Good-Friday, the morning service was performed at Calvary with the most touching ceremonies by the Franciscan Fathers. I was present. About nine o'clock, loud cries, coming from about the church, suddenly interrupted the prayers : the uproar kept increasing, and we soon learned the cause of it. A violent conflict had taken place between the Armenians and the Greeks. Tired of waiting, both insisted furiously that the door should be opened ; and pushing, thrusting, shouting, they reciprocally strove to keep off their opponents, that they might get in first themselves. A few minutes

afterwards, we learned, not without alarm, that force or treachery had opened the door, and that the crowd was rushing in from all sides. "Good God ! and the most holy Sacrament !" exclaimed Father Perpetuus, secretary of the Holy Land, who was next to me. At these words, I dashed down Calvary, forced my way with some difficulty through the crowd, and penetrated into the Holy Sepulchre, determined to lose my life rather than suffer a sacrilegious profanation. I found myself alone : luckily the Turkish guard succeeded in its efforts to keep back the most headstrong, and by its energetic resistance afforded time to finish the holy ceremonies. The host was carried back in procession to the church of the Franciscan Fathers, and the sanctuaries were not given up to the Greeks till all the Catholics had retired.

At dinner, the whole community, the Father warden at their head, ate upon their knees : bread, water, and a few leaves of salad constituted the whole repast.

At half-past three, the Fathers went to the office of the Darkness, as on the two preceding days. It was the last time that I should hear at Jerusalem the voice of the prophet of Anathoth, and that idea caused me to feel more sensibly the vehemence and the tenderness of his lamentations. You may sometimes have had occasion to remark how much deeper an impression is made by the words and wishes of those we love when the hour of parting arrives, especially when we are thoroughly convinced that we shall never meet again : then the heart is more than ever oppressed ; sighs escape us ; the eyes are moistened with tears ; it is a kind of suffering which differs but little from that produced by the rupture of

ties which death has just broken. Such, and even more painful, were my feelings, when Jeremiah pronounced those words so perfectly in harmony with the doleful mystery of Good-Friday and with the thoughts that filled my soul :—

“The joy of our hearts is ceased ; our dance is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from our head : woe unto us that we have sinned. For this our heart is faint, for these things our eyes are dim. Because of the mountain of Zion which is desolate ; the foxes walk upon it. Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever ; thy throne from generation to generation. Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time ? Turn thou us to thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned ; renew our days as of old.”

In order to impress the more deeply upon the mind the remembrance of the passion and death of our Saviour, and to excite more forcibly in the heart the feelings of compunction, gratitude, and love, which they ought to produce, the Fathers perform every year, on Good Friday, a ceremony entirely harmonizing with the spirit of the Orientals, and examples of which we find only in the missions in Asia, which probably borrowed it from the practice adopted in Palestine.

By means of a figure in relievo, of the natural size, the head and limbs of which are flexible, they represent the crucifixion, the taking down from the cross, and the burial of Jesus Christ, in such a manner as to render all the principal circumstances perceptible and striking.

This ceremony, at once touching and awful, took place towards the close of day, amidst an immense

concourse of men, women, and children, drawn together, some by sincere piety, others by a curiosity wholly profane.

The Fathers of the Holy Land, assembled in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, left it about six, having at their head one of their number, who, escorted by the young Arabs of the monastery, bore the great crucifix. The monks and the Catholics, walking slowly in two lines, with torches in their hands, recited, in a shrill and plaintive tone, sometimes the *Miserere*, at others, the *Stabat*.

The procession stopped, first at the altar of the Division of the Garments, and next at that of the *Impropere*, where a short, simple address, but full of unction, on the painful scenes of the Passion commemorated by those two places, was delivered by a Spanish Father. It then pursued its course, without interruption, to the top of Golgotha.

There, the monk who carried the crucifix set it down with reverence at the foot of the altar, and the Spanish Father, resuming his discourse, continued, in presence of the multitude, deeply affected and melting into tears, the melancholy account of the sufferings and ignominy endured by our Saviour till the moment when he was crucified.

He then ceased speaking, and the image of Jesus, having been nailed to the wood, this crucifix was set up on the same spot where had been erected the real cross, on which the salvation of the human race was consummated. The good friar, in a voice broken and almost stifled by sobs, then recounted the last words and the last moments of the august victim, giving himself up a sacrifice on this spot to atone for our sins and to



reconcile us with his Father. But it became more and more difficult to hear him : the crowd, already powerfully moved by what had preceded, was attentive only to what it saw, and it could scarcely catch the words of the speaker for cries, sobs, sighs, and tears.

After an interval of a quarter of an hour had been allowed for their grief to subside, one of the Fathers, provided with hammer and pincers, ascended to the top of the cross, took off the crown of thorns, and, while some of his brethren supported the body by means of white scarfs passed under the arms, extracted the nails from the hands and the feet ; and presently the image was taken down, nearly in the same manner as Christ himself was. The officiating Father, and all the monks in turn, advanced in silence, knelt down, and kissed respectfully the crown and the nails, which were immediately presented to the veneration of the multitude.

The procession soon moved away, in the same order as it had come to Calvary. The crown and the nails were carried in a silver basin by a monk, and the image by four others, in the same manner as a corpse is borne to the grave. They paused at the stone of the Uncion, to imitate, on that spot, the pious action of Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and the holy women. All the requisite materials had been prepared ; the stone was covered with a very fine white sheet ; on the corners were vases of perfumes. The body, wrapped in a shroud, was laid upon it, with the head resting upon a pillow. The officiating priest sprinkled it with essences, caused some aromatics to be burned, and, having prayed a few moments in silence, explained, in a brief exhor-

tation, the motive of this station. The procession then continued its course to the church; the image was laid upon the marble slab of the Holy Sepulchre, and another discourse concluded the ceremony.

On the following day, Saturday, the Fathers performed the service with solemnity. The benediction of the fire and of the tapers, the reading of the prophecies, the blessing of the baptismal fonts, the mass, and all the ceremonies which accompany it, differ but little from what is practised in our churches in the West. But what I cannot help noticing, because it is to me a subject of ever new admiration, is that piety, that modesty, that gravity of the good Fathers, which at all times, and especially on holy Saturday, present so extraordinary, so striking a contrast with the worship, demeanour, and manners of the Greek bishops and priests. Holy Saturday is the day on which the latter take advantage, most grossly and most beneficially for themselves, of the simplicity and ignorance of their adherents. Turning into derision the ancient custom of the Latin church, to extract the new fire on that day from a flint, they give out that to them, the particular objects of divine favour, Heaven itself takes care to send the paschal fire, and that, by a special privilege, their bishops are the only happy mortals chosen to receive it in their hands.

After the procession has gone thrice round the Holy Sepulchre, a bishop and two priests, whom he takes for his assistants, shut themselves up in it, and there stay till, as they say, the Lord has granted their prayers. Meanwhile, the priests and the deacons, crowding around the door, continue singing lustily amidst the noise and

clamour of the people, impatient to learn the accomplishment of the prodigy. Presently it is announced that the heavenly fire has descended; all the lamps in the Sepulchre are quickly lighted; the doors are thrown open; the bishop appears, holding in his hand a few small tapers, lighted at the divine flame; and the amazed multitude, not doubting the miracle, hasten with torches to participate in it. Having witnessed these ridiculous tricks, the vociferations and the uproar amidst which they are performed, I am obliged to confess that, if any thing appeared to me really miraculous, it was the inconceivable stupidity of those who were their dupes.

On that day, the governor of Jerusalem, accompanied by his principal officers, attended the service; it is a right which is reserved for him; he may even go to it, when he pleases, with the women of his harem. He came to see the different ceremonies, and, among others, that of the distribution of the fire by the Greeks. It is a remarkable thing that the marvellous operation never commences till he is present and has given the signal for it. As soon as he had spoken, Heaven obeyed him, and it was evident that, before it sent down the paschal fire to the objects of its especial favour, it had condescended to wait till a Turk had given permission for it.

At midnight, the Fathers return to the service. I am no longer young: I have travelled much; I have seen many fine sights in my life, but never do I recollect to have beheld a more magnificent, a more imposing scene than that presented by the church of the Holy Sepulchre in the night between Saturday and Easter-Sunday.

Figure to yourself, my friend, a nave of immense magnitude, illuminated in every part with extraordinary taste and profusion, ten thousand pilgrims, arrayed in their best apparel, carrying torches in their hands, the women and children filling the vast extent of the galleries, also holding torches, and all making the sacred vaults ring with glorious Hallelujahs; while bishops, covered with gold and precious stones, preceded by censer-bearers, perfuming their 'passage with incense, and followed by a considerable number of priests in white copes richly embroidered with gold, walk in procession round the tomb, in the order assigned to each nation, singing psalms and hymns in honour of Him, who by his resurrection triumphed over death: imagine, I say, such a scene, and calculate, if you can, the impression which it must produce upon the soul of every one who has eyes. From my mind it banished even the recollection of the painful things which had so recently afflicted me. "Hallelujah! hallelujah!" I cried, in the transports of a joy, whose vehemence I could not moderate; "hallelujah! hallelujah!" and I blessed the God of mercy for having guided my steps to Jerusalem, and for having granted me the favour to mingle my cries of gladness with the cries of the pious Christians who had the happiness to celebrate the victory of his divine Son on the very spot where that Son had triumphed.

A night so soothing, so consolatory for the heart, was followed by the light of the greatest of days, of that day, *par excellence*, "which the Lord hath made." I attended the different services, and I there saw displayed all the most magnificent gifts sent thither in better times

by Christian Europe. The tapestries with which the church was adorned, the crosses, the chandeliers, the lamps, the pontifical ornaments, those of the simple priests, were so many memorials of the antique piety and beneficence of sovereigns. An altar, pompously decked out with every thing that could heighten the splendour of the festival, was placed at the door of the Holy Sepulchre. There the Father Warden performed mass pontifically. He himself administered the communion to the numerous Catholics and to the pilgrims, who, two by two, and with deep devotion, presented themselves at the holy table; and the service concluded with a solemn benediction.

The evening, like the morning, passed in prayer, in sacred joy; and, when night came, the church still resounded with hymns, with psalms, and, above all, with the song of glory—"Hallelujah!"

Farewell, my dear friend. To-morrow, according to all appearance, I shall return to the monastery of St. Saviour; I shall visit that of St. John as soon as possible, and, when I have finished the business that still detains me, I shall set out for Galilee.

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### LETTER XXXIV.

EXCURSION TO ST. JOHN'S IN THE DESERT—CONVENT OF THE HOLY CROSS—VILLAGE OF ST. JOHN—MONASTERY—BEAUTIFUL CHURCH BELONGING TO THE FRANCISCAN FATHERS—SANCTUARY—PLACE OF THE VISITATION—GROTTO OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST—DESERT—TOMB OF ST. ELIZABETH.

Jerusalem, April 28, 1832.

I have taken advantage of my first leisure since Easter to make a short excursion in the mountains of Judea.

I have just returned from St. John's in the desert, and now give you the particulars of my visit to that monastery.

The road leading to it is, like all those in Palestine, stony and almost impassable: it is but slowly and with great difficulty that you can travel along it.

I was accompanied, as usual, by my dragoman. We turned a little out of our road to see a convent that belongs to the Georgians, and bears the name of the Holy Cross. If we may credit a pious tradition, this convent was built on the spot where the Jews, after the condemnation of our Saviour, cut down the tree which they made the instrument of his execution. The church is clean and decorated: it is chiefly lighted by a very beautiful dome. The walls are covered with paintings in fresco, the colours of which are almost effaced by time.

When we had got back into our road, my dragoman pointed out to me, a little farther on, a very high ground, upon which, according to the general belief, the ark of the covenant was set down for some time.

After an hour's march, or thereabout, from this spot, we perceived the village of St. John, towards which we descended. It is two leagues distant from Jerusalem.

The monastery is situated in the centre of the village. It is a remarkable edifice, raised on a vast platform, so as to overlook the country to a great distance. The church, taken away and profaned by the infidels, remained for a long time in a state of ruin. Louis XIV. recovered it from their hands, and caused it to be repaired and adorned in such a manner that it is now one of the

handsomest and most regular in the East. It belongs to the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Land, who send Spanish monks of their order to do duty there.

The site of the house of Zachariah, where St. John Baptist was born, is within the church itself. A sanctuary has been constructed in it like most of those that are to be seen in Palestine. You descend to it by a flight of marble steps, and come to an altar where the good Fathers say mass every day. Around this sanctuary are magnificent basso-relievos, representing the birth of the holy Forerunner, the baptism of Christ, and his death. At the centre, in the pavement, is imbedded a circular marble, likewise surrounded with relievos, on which is this inscription :

HIC PRÆCURSOR DOMINI NATUS EST.

The Turks who live at St. John are more malignant than most of those who are masters of the country around Jerusalem. They omit no opportunity of annoying the Fathers of the monastery by their extortions and injustice, and not a year passes in which these poor monks have not a great deal to suffer.

Not far from the monastery is the valley of Turpentine, so called from the great number of turpentine-trees growing there. It is five or six hundred paces in circumference, and the soil is fertile : the hills which border it are covered with olive, pomegranate, and fig-trees. On this spot were encamped the Hebrews commanded by Saul, when they were insulted by Goliath. I have seen the brook in which David picked up five stones, with one of which he slew the giant.

A quarter of a league distant is the place known by the name of the Visitation. It is situated on the slope of a hill, where Zachariah and Elizabeth had a country-house. Tradition relates that the Virgin Mary first went to the house where Elizabeth usually resided, in the village which now bears the name of St. John Baptist, and where John was born, but, not finding her cousin there, she went on to her country-house.

On the site of this house, St. Helena caused a very handsome church to be built. There are still left considerable ruins of it, from amidst which rise large trees, one of them majestically overtopping all the rest. In exploring these ruins, the aspect of which is truly picturesque, I came to a sort of open chapel, at the farther end of which is an altar formed of several large stones rudely placed one upon another, and I learned from the guide who accompanied me that the monks of St. John go thither every year on pilgrimage, and perform mass there on the day of the Visitation. This chapel, if such it can still be called, stands on the very spot where Elizabeth met her who was to be the mother of the Saviour of mankind, and who was inspired by the Holy Spirit with that admirable hymn, the prophetic words of which, repeated from age to age, have resounded for eighteen hundred years in all the solemnities of the Christian church.

I remarked upon the altar two small earthen vases containing flowers, which were beginning to fade. These were, no doubt, the homage of some poor Christians of St. John. I wished in my turn to leave an humble tribute to the mother of Jesus, to my patroness, to her whose name, becoming my own on the day of my religious



profession, was given to me as a pledge of grace and blessing. I went forth, and, searching about in the neighbouring fields, I picked up a few fresh flowers, and formed with them a little bouquet, which I respectfully deposited upon the altar.

What I had just done, however, was not sufficient for the emotions of gratitude and love that I felt so deliciously springing up in my heart. Since I have been a monk, I have never attended any of the services of the church, especially on the days set apart for honouring the Virgin Mary, when the *Magnificat* has not exalted my soul, and awakened within me the most soothing thoughts, the tenderest affections. How many times have I not asked myself how words so grand, so sublime, so divine, could have issued from the lips of an humble girl, born of poor parents, without education and without art; how that obscure virgin, who never knew the world, and whom the world never knew, could foretell that the whole world, that "all generations" should not only know her, but "should thenceforth for ever call her blessed!" And to the questions which my surprise suggested, I saw, as I still see, no other answer than the very words of Mary's hymn: It is because "the Lord regarded the low estate of his handmaiden;" because "he that is mighty had done great things for her;" because "he had shewed strength with his arm, and scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts."

And, in the transport into which I was thrown by such a prodigy, I could not sufficiently thank God for having decreed that well-disposed men should find in the *Magnificat* one of the finest prophetic evidences of the

divinity of that religion which Christ came to bring upon earth.

But who could then have told me that I should some day have the happiness to stand upon the spot where Mary had stood, amid the ruins of that unknown dwelling, whence the divine canticle issued to spread to the uttermost ends of the earth ! That happiness thrilled me. That I might be able to give more free scope to the feelings with which I was penetrated, I ordered my dragoman and my guide to withdraw for a short time ; and, being left alone, I began to sing the *Magnificat* with a loud voice, though tremulous with emotion, and I chanted it to the end, pausing at every verse to enjoy the delicious feelings, the consolation, the admiration, which it excited.

On quitting the chapel of the Visitation, we pursued our course towards the grotto of St. John Baptist, a league and a half distant. My dragoman pointed out to me by the way a stone, or mass of rock, which attracts the notice of pilgrims, because, according to tradition, John frequently preached there to the multitude that followed him.

The desert is dry and barren. On the surrounding hills are, nevertheless, to be seen some mean villages, and among them one very near the grotto which the saint inhabited.

This cavern is in the interior of a rock, the access to which is rugged and difficult. In climbing up to it with too great haste, I had so severe a fall that, for a moment, I was afraid that I should not be able to go any farther. For some minutes I lay stunned by the accident, and

quite unable to rise. To no purpose I called for help to my guide, whom I had left behind ; instead of hastening up, the idiot stood still, looking at me, and crying out to me with all his might to go more slowly. I was obliged to wait till the pain I felt had subsided, and to get up of myself as well as I could.

The cavern is about twelve feet long by eight wide. The Franciscan Fathers go thither to say mass on the festival of the saint. The spot is marked where he was accustomed to lie down to rest. At the farther end is a spring, the water of which is excellent. I filled a bottle with it, and carried away with me a few little pieces of stone from the rock.

The spot where was situated the tomb of Elizabeth is a quarter of a league distant. It is pointed out by a tree and a few stones. I did not go thither : it was late ; and, suffering from my fall, I was anxious to get back to the monastery.

END OF VOL. I.

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View on the spot by the house.

THE HOUSE OF THE

THE HOUSE OF THE

THE HOUSE OF THE

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A PILGRIMAGE  
TO  
PALESTINE,  
EGYPT, AND SYRIA.

BY  
MARIE-JOSEPH DE GERAMB,  
MONK OF LA TRAPPE.

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1840.

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Pyrene on the spot by L. B. ...

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**PILGRIMAGE**  
TO  
**JERUSALEM AND MOUNT SINAI.**

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Jerusalem, May 1, 1832.

I HAVE as yet said scarcely any thing to you of the monastery of St. Saviour, which I make my home : I will now give you some particulars concerning it.

This monastery is one of the most ancient. It has been erected at different times, and without any regular plan. It consists of buildings added to buildings : they enclose three courts, and two very small gardens. Every

thing in it is simple, and even poor. The rooms of the monks are small and scantily furnished. The lodging of the Father warden of the Holy Sepulchre, on whose splendour certain authors, as I have already told you, have thought fit to dilate, is neither larger nor better furnished; and the meanest tradesman in Italy would certainly not be satisfied with it. The only decent apartment is the Divan, where the community assembles, and where the Father warden receives such persons as have occasion to speak with him.

Strangers are lodged in a totally separate house. There are, however, two or three rooms in the convent, which are assigned to such of them as the Fathers wish to distinguish; they are far apart from the cells of the monks, quite as poor as the rest, and, I must say, too naked for the purpose to which they are destined, especially as the lay pilgrims who occupy them always leave some tokens of their munificence. Upon the whole, such are the poverty and the simplicity of life prevailing in the monastery, that I never saw any thing which presented a more striking contrast with the lying reports of writers by whom it is slandered: of this a circumstance relating to myself will serve better than any thing else that could be said to convey a correct idea.

As I had come hither with several letters of recommendation, and, among them, one from the Sacred Congregation of Rome, it was thought right to pay me particular deference and respect; and I was, therefore, offered one of the best cells opposite to the apartment of the Father warden. This cell is allotted to such of the monks only as hold some office. Well—all the furniture



I had there consisted of a common chair and an old broken arm-chair; and the secretary remarked that he had given me, as a favour, one of his towels. When I wanted water, I had to fetch it myself; and, to sweep my room, I borrowed a broom from the monk in the adjoining cell.

The fare of the Fathers is extremely frugal. The mutton, the only meat they can procure, is very bad; vegetables are scarce: every thing is cooked with oil, and that of the country is not good.

Besides the Lent instituted by the Church, and which is generally observed as a preparation for Easter, the Franciscan Fathers have another of about two months, from the first of November to Christmas, and not less do they sanctify the rest of the year by religious austerities. Immortification is certainly a sin everywhere; but at Jerusalem it becomes a crime, especially in a monk, and this the Franciscan knows: he knows that a disciple of Jesus Christ, feasting himself here, and pampering his sensual appetites, would be an object as worthy of horror as a parricide, perfuming and crowning himself with roses, on the very spot where he had murdered his father.

But the privations imposed by the seasons specially devoted to penitence, and those added under other circumstances by zeal or the rules of the order, are nothing in comparison with the hardships and privations of another kind, to which the monk of the Holy Land is doomed. On leaving his country to come hither through a thousand dangers, he must have made up his mind to a life of trouble, far from all that is dearest to him, with-

out thenceforth being able to find any other peace than that imparted by a good conscience, any other joy than that inward joy with which Christ repays the sacrifices that we make to his love.

If the Turks tolerate him among them, if they allow him to celebrate the holy mysteries agreeably to the catholic ritual, it is not so much because the catholics have paid dearly for that right, as because that toleration is a continual source of profit to their sordid avarice, to that greediness, that thirst of money which nothing can satiate. Besides the annual tribute paid by the monastery, it is obliged to submit to the particular extortions of pachas, governors, and subordinate officers, and to purchase, by arbitrary and sometimes enormous sums, a tranquillity always transient and of short duration. Not a month passes but cries of death ring around the holy habitation : to-day, it is the plague, from which you are never safe ; to-morrow, an insurrection ; next, wars between the pachas, the successive extortions of the conquerors, the annoyance and exactions of the Arabs. In short, the monk of St. Francis is a man of sorrows, who cannot hope for any other happiness on earth than in bearing his cross with fortitude, and following Jesus Christ to Calvary.

All the catholic establishments in the East, excepting one, that at Cairo, which is under the protection of Austria, are under that of France ; and to this power they have recourse, when it becomes impossible for them to bear the excessive oppression which they sometimes undergo. Nothing can convey a more accurate notion of the position of the monks of the Holy Land than the

following letter, addressed in 1805, by the superiors and the Father warden, to M. Horace Sebastiani, at that time ambassador of France at Constantinople.

“ The unparalleled acts of injustice, the extortions, the arbitrary imposts, which for some years past have followed one another in rapid succession, on the part of the pachas, the governors, and their subordinate officers, have reduced us to such a state, that, unable to subsist, we shall shortly be obliged to leave the Holy Land, unless we can obtain the means of preventing the Turks from continuing to rob us of a quantity of money, which they do with threats, insults, and even the bastinado.

“ Ever since the year 1762, there was given to the pacha of Damascus, who was governor of Jerusalem, only seven thousand piastres, with seven thousand more for the services which he had rendered to the Holy Land; and such was the state of things till the death of Mahomet Pacha Ebneladin. But, in 1783, Mohamed Djezar, pacha of Damascus and Jerusalem, began to take by force twenty-five thousand piastres more than it was customary to pay. This continued for seven years, during which he was at different times governor, to say nothing of other exactions with which he was incessantly harassing us. All our representations to the Porte were unavailing, as this pacha obeyed none of its firmans; and what was worse, all the other pachas followed his example; so that, in the year 1797, the Pacha Abdallah Ebneladin, having become governor of Damascus, took from us by force thirty thousand piastres, exclusively of the sum that was annually paid him. We were not then able to make any remonstrances, having been, to crown

our misfortunes, persecuted by the Turks of the party hostile to this pacha, who not only took possession of our monastery but threw us into prison, where we ran a thousand risks of death, and were obliged to give seven hundred purses to stop the persecutions which the grandees had excited against us, besides twenty-four thousand piastres to the mufti Sheik Hassan Elasnad, our sworn foe. And, after all these losses, there came the pacha Hemad Abumarah, who, during the short time that he remained at Jerusalem and Jaffa, tyrannically wrung from us three hundred purses, besides two hundred more which he took by the name of a loan, but not a medina of which have we been able to get back, notwithstanding all the trouble that we have taken on the subject; and lastly, what completely discourages and casts us down is, that, six weeks ago, there came the pacha whom we have already mentioned, Abdallah Ebneladin, pacha of Damascus, who, in addition to the seven thousand piastres that we gave him, demanded a sum equal to all the money that we had paid to Djezar, assigning as a reason that the latter had unjustly taken possession of his pachalik, and that consequently the money we had given to Djezar was by right his: and he forced us, with the dagger at our throats, to give him one hundred thousand piastres, in spite of the kalmarif of the Porte, which we showed him, which is an irrevocable order enjoining him to be content with the usual tribute. He absolutely refused to read it, calling it a *rag of paper*, for which he did not care. Accordingly, he took the hundred thousand piastres, and went away, leaving us a prey to all our other enemies. Indeed, no

sooner had he quitted Jerusalem, than the Bedouins seized three of our monks, whom they detained for a month, with a view to force us thereby to reimburse them for the contributions which they had had to pay to the pacha. God knows how this will end ; and we should not have words sufficient, were we to attempt to describe all our sufferings : the very santons of Mount Sion take large sums from us, and prevent us from burying our dead, whether monks or other catholics, if we give them a refusal."

From this letter you may judge, my friend, of the state of the monks of the Holy Land, and that to which they would be reduced, if the alms of the pious were to be withheld from them.

It must not be supposed that persecutions of the kind which they here complain of are very rare ; they are, on the contrary, frequent, and almost always inevitable in time of war or rebellion. How much had they not to suffer, for instance, in 1826, during the struggle between the pacha of Acre and the pacha of Damascus ! In the month of September, the former having laid siege to the holy city, the unfortunate Franciscans were exposed to all imaginable outrages and extortions. Not only had they to support all the Christians of Jerusalem, who had taken refuge in the monastery to avoid the violence of the Turks, but they were compelled to pay sums so enormous that they were obliged to pawn the sacred vessels, happy to extricate themselves from the dilemma at that rate. To defray all these expenses, the Fathers of the Holy Land have no resource but the donations of Christendom, and, unluckily, these are becoming more

and more scanty. Yet, how can alms be better applied ? it were to be wished, for the greater glory of God, that they were more abundant.

If I had the honour to be a priest and a preacher, I should consider it my duty, on my return to Europe, to ascend the pulpit and make the pious acquainted as well with the deplorable situation as with the admirable virtues of those monks, who, appointed to take care of the manger, of Calvary, of the tomb of the divine Redeemer, defend, at the peril of their lives, those sacred trusts ; and who, prostrate in the dust, never cease to pray for the Church and for the Christian sovereigns and nations. I would make them sensible of the value of that devotedness, and of the obligation they are under to contribute to the support of those heroes of the faith, whom the most stupid impiety alone could term “ fanatical monks, kneeling before a few stones to deceive the vulgar ;” in short, I would teach them — for, in this age of “ enlightenment,” how many are there that are yet ignorant of the fact !—that monachism in the Holy Land is a second Providence, not only for the catholics scattered throughout Egypt and Syria, but even for many travellers who have not the happiness to belong to our holy religion.

I cannot stop, my dear Charles, to descant at length upon those fervent Franciscan missionaries, who come to the East to devote themselves for twelve years to the instruction and salvation of souls ; and who, in Cairo, Alexandria, the isle of Cyprus, at Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jaffa, Rama, Acre, Seida, Tripoli in Syria, Damascus, Aleppo, Constantinople, fulfil this mission

with a zeal, a charity, an edification, worthy of the primitive times of the Church ; but I will tell you that the Fathers of the Holy Land constantly take care of the catholics who are in distress ; and that it is principally in times of calamity that they show themselves above all praise, paying the rent of the poor, and the fines and the duties exacted from them by the government ; distributing bread to the needy, soup to the infirm ; giving shoes, and articles of clothing to indigent women ; sending the physician of the monastery to the sick, and supplying them with the medicines which he prescribes. The widows and the orphans are particular objects of their paternal solicitude.

Not only in Jerusalem is it thus : the same course is pursued in the principal convents, at Bethlehem, at Nazareth, at St. John's, as well as at all the other monastic establishments in the Holy Land, Egypt, and Syria ; and everywhere more is done than I have yet told you : when they know of a person in distress, they never ask to what religion he belongs before they afford relief.

The Fathers of the Holy Land, at Jerusalem, lodge and feed for a month all the pilgrims who apply to them, excepting the Greeks, the Armenians, &c., who find an asylum in the monasteries belonging to their respective nations. In all places where they have convents, they keep at their own expence a schoolmaster, specially charged to teach the Arab youth, in the first place, religion ; and in the next, reading, writing, and the Italian language ; and to this valuable boon they add that of feeding the children who receive these lessons.

Such, in a few words, my friend, is the use made by

the Fathers of the Holy Land of the alms which they collect: for themselves they reserve scarcely sufficient to procure absolute necessities. And now, I ask you, if people knew, if they saw, what I know and what I see, could Christian piety help deeming it a duty to afford them assistance?

Among the many documents recording the munificence of which the sovereigns and princes of Europe formerly gave striking demonstrations to the religious establishments of the Holy Land, there is one which you will probably be as much surprised as pleased to find here. It is a letter, dated 1516, from Henry VIII. of England, then the stanch defender of catholicism and catholics, but fifteen years afterwards their most furious persecutor. We see from this epistle, the original of which is in Latin, what an interest that monarch took in the sanctuaries of Palestine, and how solicitous he was that the Fathers appointed to take care of them, and to exercise their sacred ministry there, should be secured from want.

“ Henry, by the grace of God, king of England and France, and lord of Ireland—

“ To our dearly beloved, venerable, and religious men, the Father Warden and the Brethren of the holy Order of Minors of the Observance, dwelling by the sepulchre of our Lord, greeting :

“ The tender attachment excited in us in our childhood by the evangelical life which you lead, and your incessant labours in the vineyard of the Lord, induces us to give you our assistance and to contribute to the support, of the sacred edifices, so much the more because,



with a zeal surpassing that of others in the places where ye are, ye make it an habitual occupation to receive pilgrims, to relieve them, and to perform many other works of charity ; because ye apply yourselves to adorn as well as to glorify, by psalms, and hymns, and perpetual sacrifices of praise, the holy places which, for our salvation, the Lord has sprinkled with his blood, especially his sacred tomb, a manifest proof of our future resurrection ; and lastly, because ye have daily to endure injuries and outrages, stripes, wounds, and torments.

“ In consequence, that ye may be able to bear these tribulations the more cheerfully, and to devote yourselves with the more ardour to prayer and other good works, and that, destined to receive a great reward in Heaven, ye may be mindful of us, we give and assign to you, by these our letters, a yearly alms of one thousand gold crowns, or an equivalent sum, to be continued during our will and good pleasure ; and which, in virtue of our ordinance, ye shall begin to receive at Rhodes, after next Whitsuntide, from the hands of the grand master of Rhodes, and so on from year to year, after the said feast, always, as herein above expressed, according to our will and good pleasure.

“ To this end, ye will go to the said grand master of Rhodes, to whose kindness and good offices we have recourse for this payment, and ye will pray to the Most High for us.

“ In faith and testimony of this our present alms, we have signed with our own hand these our letters patent, and have ordered them to be corroborated by the affixing of our privy seal.

“ Given in our palace at Greenwich, the 23rd of November, in the year of our Lord 1516, and in the eighth of our reign.

Signed,                   “ HENRICUS REX.”  
And lower down,                   “ ANDREAS HAMMON.”

The original, written upon parchment, is in the archives of the convent of St. Isidore at Rome.

But it was not Henry VIII. alone who showed himself so liberal to the establishments in the Holy Land. There was a time when the catholic sovereigns vied with one another in generosity towards them ; and there is not a church or a sacristy in all Palestine where you do not meet with some tokens of it. France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Poland, Venice, Tuscany, Naples, Rome, and the other states of Italy, cheerfully sent their offerings to the holy places. That I may not tire you with the detail of so many donations, I shall notice those of Spain alone, which are the most considerable.

Isabella, queen of Castille, not only delighted to strip herself of valuable jewels in favour of the Holy Sepulchre, but assigned to the monks a yearly alms of one thousand gold crowns.

The emperor Charles V. caused the church, which threatened to fall to ruin, to be repaired at his expence.

Philip II. sent an extremely rich dress of black velvet, on which were embroidered, in fine pearls, magnificent designs of our Lord's passion, and of the principal saints of the order of St. Francis.

Philip III. and his queen, Margaret, not only allotted to the monks a yearly sum of thirty thousand ducats, but

gave cups, albs, a silver lamp of larger dimensions than any then known, and multiplied their donations to such a degree, that it was a common saying in the monastery that "his catholic Majesty took Jerusalem for his Escorial, and that queen Margaret had turned sacristan of the Holy Sepulchre."

But Philip IV. distinguished himself above all others: he alone did more in the course of his reign for the support of the holy places than all the other princes put together in three centuries. In 1628, he sent thirty thousand ducats for the repair of the convent of Bethlehem; and from 1640 to 1652, so abundant were the alms received from him by the Latin Fathers, that it was said of him that "he buried his treasures in the sepulchre of our Lord."

Among the gifts which even at the present day attract the notice of pilgrims, I could not help remarking with a sort of admiration the albs, those chiefly which are used only on high festivals. There are several which are embroidered in gold; and I have seen some so much the more valuable, in my eyes at least, for having been worked by the imperial hands of the immortal Maria Theresa herself.

The Fathers of the Holy Land keep in their archives a kind of register, in which are inscribed the names of the pilgrims of note, who from time to time visit the Holy Sepulchre. In turning over the list of distinguished persons whom piety brought to Jerusalem in the course of the fifteenth century, I have found among others, under the year 1486, the following names:—

Among the Germans: John, duke of Pagern; William,

count of Werdenberg; Dubolt de Hasperg, knight; Louis de Rechtberg; Joseph, noble of Zug;—and among the French: De Châteaubriant, governor of Lyons; De Salouiller; Guido Pussart de Sainte-Marthe; André d'Ungerie, chamberlain to the king.

I should have made you but very imperfectly acquainted with the position of the monks of the Holy Land, were I not to say a few words concerning the vexations and annoyances which the Greeks are incessantly stirring up against them.

Nothing gives them more uneasiness, or obliges them to be more upon their guard, than the continual manœuvres by which their enemies strive to wrest from the catholics the few sanctuaries that are still left them. Emboldened by former attempts, which proved but too successful, they watch for and dexterously seize all occasions for supplanting them, and for getting new rights granted to themselves. Powerful, from their immense wealth, as well as from the friends whom they have at Constantinople; strong, from the number of the professors of their creed, resident in Jerusalem; and stronger still, from that of their pilgrims; they are formidable, and defy all consequences. If they think fit to rouse the passions against the catholics, that they may be able to usurp some prerogatives beyond those possessed by the latter, they will go so far as to put forward the rudest, the most daring, and the most mischievous of their people, principally sailors from the Archipelago, who amount to five or six hundred, at least, at the time of the pilgrimages; they will set them upon their

enemies, in the very church of the Holy Sepulchre, not scrupling to gain by violence and scandal what justice and reason refuse them. And this is a strange circumstance: those two classes of men, Greeks and Armenians, almost always in opposition and at war with one another, never agree but to harass, to torment, to oppress, if possible, the Fathers of the Holy Land: it is then only that they cordially make common cause. Nothing can be more deplorable, nothing more hideous, than this incessant warfare around the tomb of the God of charity, of him who made it a law, a sacred duty, for his disciples to love one another. These Greeks, these Armenians, call themselves Christians, while, by their conduct, they dishonour, they ruin christianity, and the Turk alone profits by it.

If I may depend on some particulars that I have collected, it is a fact that, in the dominions of the Porte, the Greek priests oblige the members of their flocks to visit Palestine once in their lives. Be this as it may, it is certain, as I have already written to you, that the number of the pilgrims of the two nations who visit Jerusalem every year is mostly about ten thousand. I add that this is a source of, I may say, inexhaustible wealth for their patriarchs and their monasteries. To give you some idea of this, I must first tell you that the tribute paid them by each pilgrim amounts, one with another, to three hundred piastres. There are some who give ten or twenty times as much. Now, suppose that, instead of ten thousand, both Greeks and Armenians, the total number were only eight thousand, which is far below the

truth, and calculate : you will have a total of two million four hundred thousand piastres.\*

With this so considerable number of the Armenians and Greeks ; with this mountain of gold, from the summit of which their chiefs, become invulnerable, never cease hurling their thunder-bolts ; compare the humble position of the Fathers of the Holy Land, who are visited annually by at most eight or ten pilgrims, almost always poor, and perhaps a hundred travellers, drawn by curiosity, and whose principal treasure is in their patience and their virtues : what a melancholy contrast ! And, if the sources of catholic charity should happen to fail, is it difficult to foresee the issue of that desperate struggle, carried on by one party for the purpose of seizing that which all the efforts of the other have great difficulty to defend, much less can they regain what it has lost ! It is impossible that it should not turn out to the prejudice of the Latins, or even to their utter ruin, especially in a country where, with money, you may buy pachas, governors, magistrates, judges, judgments ; the most ridiculous privileges, the most atrocious decisions ; in a country, in short, where, with money, you may not only ensure impunity for the most crying injustice, but proscribe, trample upon, crush.

The danger is much more serious when, to the power of gold, men add, like the Greeks, suppleness, craft, perfidy, and a profound knowledge of mankind. They know that the success of their pretensions depends on

\* The value of the piastre varies, and depends in general on the will, or, rather, the caprice of the pacha. When I was at Jerusalem it was worth eight sous French money.

the caprices of a restless, jealous, violent, tyrannical government. They will cringe basely before it; they will, if need be, bow down their faces in the dust, in token of obedience and respect; and will be still more prodigal of meannesses than of purses, which, nevertheless, to carry a point, they offer by thousands.

In their state of destitution the Latin Fathers, on the contrary, have and employ no other weapons against the different kinds of foes to whose attacks they are liable, than submission to the authority under which they live; resignation, prayer, and all the sacrifices compatible with the honour of religion and the duties of christian piety. Simple, some of them, even to excess,\* persuaded that all men are upright as themselves; neither knowing nor studying events or their consequences; ready to believe all that is told them; full of blind confidence in their dragomans, who are not monks, like those of the Greeks, and who are liable to deceive them or not to defend their interests with sufficient zeal: if, in spite of so

\* Here is a characteristic trait: — Some years since an unknown personage called at the house of the Franciscan Fathers, giving himself out to be the archduke-palatine, brother of our beloved emperor. Great joy in the convent — they had his imperial highness under their roof! — “Brother Ambrose, have you seen the archduke?” “No, Father.” — “Go and see him then. What an amiable prince! How different from us, those great folks! one knows them at a glance: their high birth is written, one may say, on their brows. How graciously his highness gives you his hand to kiss! it makes you cry for joy! What an honour for the monastery! You know that he had the mishap to be plundered by the Arabs. The scoundrels! rob a prince! an imperial prince! His majesty, the emperor, will certainly declare war against them, to revenge the insult offered to his family!” Such were the homely exclamations of these good and simple Fathers in favour of an impostor, whose address robbed them of a very considerable sum. Not long afterwards this adventurer was hanged in London.

many causes which must, one would think, hasten their fall, they continue to maintain their ground, it can only be by a particular disposition of that Providence, which commands human perverseness as well as the waves of the sea, and says to it: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther."

It must be confessed, however, that, if the Latin Fathers know less of the country and of men than the Greeks, this arises, probably, not so much from their neglecting that important study as from the shortness of their abode in Palestine. The Greek bishops and the official persons of their nation reside there for a very long time: they have frequent, almost daily, intercourse with the population, and thus gain an experience which they know how to employ with success. This is not the case with the Franciscans. Secluded from the Mussulmans, they have none but the most indispensable relations with them; and, with the exception of the missionaries, it is very rarely that they pass more than three years in the Holy Land. To that term the functions of the Father warden are limited. Out of these three years, it takes at least one to get acquainted with business; another to visit the scattered monasteries in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Cyprus. In the course of the third, he can scarcely avoid being diverted from the duties of his office, by preparations for a speedy return to his native country, which he naturally longs to see again, after so many hardships, dangers, fatigues, and humiliations. How, with such occupations and so short a stay, is it possible to gain information and influence; and to struggle efficaciously against wealthy, wily, and



stationary rivals, who are incessantly labouring to supplant you !

Were I permitted to express my thoughts to the Franciscan superiors in Europe, I would tell them that it is ardently to be wished that they would send to the Holy Land men who combine with the high piety of those with whom I passed such happy days at Jerusalem a deeper knowledge of men and things; or who, at least, could remain there long enough to acquire it, and to make it subservient to the glory of God and the triumph of our holy religion. Full of gratitude to the good Fathers, full of admiration of their virtues, fain would I, at the expence of my blood, at the expence of the years that may still be left me on earth, procure for them the rest, the peace, and, above all, the protection which they so much need against the persecutions to which they are liable. Since the late invasion, their tranquillity has been rather less disturbed: the Egyptian government seems to manifest a favourable disposition towards them; it has even ordered them not to pay the Turks the sums which they were accustomed to exact. What will be the end of this? God knows !

Adieu, my dear friend ! According to all appearance, my next letter will not be dated from Jerusalem. My eyes fill with tears; my bosom heaves. Once more, farewell.

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## LETTER XXXVI.

PREPARATIONS FOR LEAVING JERUSALEM — LAST FAREWELL TO THE SANCTUARIES AT BETHLEHEM; THE TOMBS OF MARY AND JOSEPH; THE GROTTO OF THE AGONY; THE GARDEN OF OLIVES — LAST NIGHT PASSED IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE — GRIEF AT LEAVING THOSE SACRED PLACES — DEPARTURE FROM JERUSALEM FOR JAFFA — THE PLAGUE IN THE HOLY CITY — M. CATAPAGO, AUSTRIAN VICE-CONSUL — RAVAGES OF THE PLAGUE AT ROME — JAFFA — IBRAHIM AGA, THE GOVERNOR; HIS CRUELTY — WEDDING OF M. CATAPAGO'S NEPHEW.

Jaffa, May 14th, 1832.

I HAD fixed my departure from Jerusalem for the 7th of this month, and I could not think of it without a feeling of intense pain. Never had my heart inclined so strongly towards any object as it inclined towards that unfortunate city; never had it experienced such lively impressions. The miser does not love his treasure, the husband his wife, the fondest of mothers her first-born, more dearly than I loved Jerusalem. The most delicious days of my life I had spent there, at Bethlehem, in Judea. When wet to the skin from a soaking shower, stiff with cold, bespattered with mud, I crossed the brook Cedron; or panting, covered with dust and perspiration, scorched by the sun, fainting with fatigue, I thus ascended, several times a week, the Mount of Olives; I felt incomparably happier than I had been in my apartments, surrounded by all that can gratify the senses; incomparably happier than I had been when, young, glowing with health, bedizened, and perfumed, I mounted the staircases of kings to participate in the pleasures and splendour of their entertainments.

Determined to pass the last days far from all distraction, and to think of nothing but my God, I had made

preparations for my departure some time beforehand. The precious objects which I meant to take with me had been carefully packed in cases, after having been blessed on the tomb of our Saviour, and deposited for a moment in each sanctuary. I wished, above all, to anoint all those sanctuaries with oil of roses, before leaving them for ever, and I had provided myself with a sufficient quantity of that perfume. The horses for the journey were ready. I belonged, if I may so say, entirely to myself; and I had yet left me two days, every hour of which I intended to make good use of.

On the 4th, very early in the morning, I set out on horseback for Bethlehem. The roads being unsafe, I reinforced my guide with an armed Bethlehemite. We had not proceeded a quarter of a league, before we perceived, at a distance, some persons walking in the same direction as ourselves, and one of whom, turning towards us, began to call us with loud cries. I advanced, and soon found myself in the presence of an elderly man, who intreated me to take up his son behind me, and to carry him to Bethlehem. I was in haste; the lad was dirty and ill clad . . . . . but, how refuse to take up a child on the road to Bethlehem! I complied, and bound him to me with my handkerchief, desiring him, by a sign, to hold fast.

On reaching the rising ground of St. Elijah, being considerably in advance of my guide and my Bethlehemite, I suddenly descried, twenty paces from me, seven or eight Turks, armed with muskets, pistols, and sabres, who appeared to be lying in ambush there. On my approach, one of them stepped forward, as if to prevent me from

passing. My mare was an excellent animal ; I might face about, and dart away with the swiftness of lightning : but the consideration that the boy, of whom I had taken charge, might run the risk of falling ; perhaps, also, a little vanity, and a sense of honour — all these, together, determined me to proceed. The Turks, who had remained concealed, suddenly rose. He who had come forward into the road did not molest me. I passed very close to him ; not without some alarm, I must confess ; and pursued my route, while all looked at me without uttering a word. When I was at some distance, I turned round to look for my travelling companions. They had approached the Turks, along with the father of the boy behind me. As they did not continue to follow, I imagined that they were stopped, and this was a fresh cause of alarm for me. Fortunately, my apprehension was not long : five minutes afterwards they rejoined me. I learned from them, that these Turks, who had immediately replaced themselves in ambuscade at the same spot, belonged to the village of St. John in the Desert ; that they were waiting for some wealthy inhabitant or other of Bethlehem to pass, with the intention of seizing and keeping him as an hostage, till, as they said, another Bethlehemite, who was in their debt and had absconded, should come back and pay them.

Strange conduct ! singular justice ! according to which all the townsmen of the runaway were held responsible for an obligation, for which none of them had made himself security !

On my arrival at Bethlehem, I learned that the plague

was ravaging its environs. I proceeded straightway to the Grotto of the Nativity. There I tarried some time in prayer, meditating anew on the ineffable mystery of mercy which was there accomplished, and repeating my humble homage to the divine Infant, who had deigned to be born there, and to suffer for us.

Bending over the manger, my soul agitated with gratitude and love, I began with trembling hand to anoint it with oil of roses. At four o'clock I uttered there, for the last time, the sweet names of Jesus and Mary, and bade farewell to those august places, deeply grieved to think that I was quitting them for ever. A few minutes afterwards, I was on the road to Jerusalem.

On reaching the monastery of St. Elijah, at the moment when the hill was about to intercept Bethlehem from my sight, I cast upon it a look of regret; as I thought, it was the last . . . But all at once this painful idea : — “ I shall never see it more ! ” darted across my mind and stopped me. I determined to bid it once more adieu, and, scampering over the ground I had just traversed, I regained the point from which I had started; and my eyes, moistened with tears, were fixed for another quarter of an hour on the cradle of my Saviour.

Next morning, by day-break, I was on horseback, to pay a last visit to the places in the vicinity of the holy city. I first went to the tomb of Mary, where the Greek sacristan, to whom I had given notice of my intention, was waiting for me. I anointed that august tomb with oil of roses, as I had done at Bethlehem. On re-ascending the steps, I entered the tombs of Joseph, Joachim, and

Anna, then went to the grotto of the Agony, and thence to the garden of Gethsemane. On reaching the Mount of Olives, I hastened to anoint the print of our Lord's foot; after which, from the top of that hill, I took a long and last survey of the plain of Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan.

Descending the holy hill, and following the brook Cedron, I once more saluted the tombs of Jehoshaphat, Zachariah, and Absalom, and went to look again at the fountain of Siloa. I then pursued my course to Mount Sion, where I cast a look at the Hall of the Last Supper, the house of Caiaphas, and the spot where Mary yielded up her soul to God. I paused before the asylum to which the Christians of Jerusalem had come "to sleep their last sleep;" I prayed for the repose of their souls, and envied their lot. I then made a circuit of the walls of the holy city at a gallop, slackening my pace only to contemplate once more the valley of Jehoshaphat, the Golden gate, and the Sterquiliniagate.

I had desired the dragomans of the monastery of St. Saviour to give notice to the Turks, who had the custody of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, to be at five o'clock in the afternoon at that temple, in which I purposed to pass the last night. As soon as I had alighted from my horse, I went thither. The doors opened at my approach, and closed again as soon as I had crossed the threshold. The creaking of the hinges of those colossal doors, the noise of the keys and of the bolts, which had so often struck my ear, without exciting any sensible emotion, now produced a sort of shudder . . . . .

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The clock had just struck one in the morning. The Franciscan Fathers, assembled in their church, were singing the *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*, when I rose to anoint the sacred tomb, before which I had long been kneeling. The scent of the perfume spread far around.

I then ascended to Golgotha, and repeated the same act at the spot where the cross was formerly erected.

In the course of my life, I have experienced severe afflictions. I have closed the eyes of a good father, of a tender mother, of a dear wife; I have lost beloved children; I have been arrested two hundred leagues from France, and dragged across all Germany to be shut up in the castle of Vincennes, from which I was not released till the entry of the allies; I have undergone what the world calls great misfortunes; I have been calumniated, persecuted; I have met with ingratitude: but, calling Him to witness who searches all hearts, and before whom I shall, perhaps, soon appear, I declare that never did sorrow so deeply affect my soul as that which seized it when I tore myself away for ever from the church of the Holy Sepulchre. While I live, it will not cease to be as vividly present to my mind as deeply engraven on my heart; the recollection of it will always thrill me, because it will always remind me more forcibly than any other recollection of Jesus crucified for my salvation, and for the salvation of the whole human race; that Jesus, to whom I owe the ineffable happiness of comprehending, of feeling, that great truth, which I would fain make the whole world comprehend and feel, that "He is every thing, and that whatever is not He is nothing."

At six in the morning of the 7th of May, I left Jerusalem, after taking leave of the good Franciscan Fathers, who had shown me the utmost kindness and attention during the five months that I had passed with them.

As the roads continued to be dangerous for travellers, I joined M. Catafago, Austrian vice-consul at St. Jean d'Acre, who, since the siege of that town, had resided at Nazareth. He had come to spend the last weeks of Lent at Jerusalem, and was going to Jaffa. Some Armenians increased our caravan, which consisted of eighty persons.

No sooner had we departed than the monastery of St. Saviour was closed for fear of the plague, which prevailed in the environs of Bethlehem. This apprehension was but too well founded; for, the day after our departure, two persons died of that disease in the convent of the Armenians.

The road to Jaffa runs through Rama; the contagion had reached the latter place, and was daily carrying off a great number of victims there. Our caravan took the precaution to skirt the walls of Rama, and to proceed, and pass the night in tents pitched in a plain, three leagues from Jaffa. I accompanied it; but I preferred lying in the open air, wrapped in my cloak, beside my mules and my baggage.

Next morning, when we were preparing to pursue our route, we were informed that the plague was raging also in the gardens surrounding the town; we were even assured that it had passed the walls. As it was of consequence to ascertain beyond doubt how the matter stood, we were going to despatch a courier forthwith, when a relative of M. Catafago's arrived. His report



somewhat tranquillized us ; the disease had as yet really manifested itself in the gardens alone. We therefore mounted our horses, and soon found ourselves at the gates of Jaffa, which we entered, pressed by a numerous crowd, which rendered impracticable the precautions that we had resolved to take, and that prudence dictated, in such serious circumstances.

I alighted, as usual, at the convent of the Holy Land. I intended to stay there but a short time, impatient as I was to reach Nazareth, which I purposed making for a while my point of departure and return, for visiting and minutely examining the numerous places of Galilee, which the Lord consecrated by his presence, covered with his miracles. What country, indeed, could I desire to make myself acquainted with, that ought to excite my religious curiosity to a higher degree ! what town, above all, was more worthy of it than Nazareth, where he spent twenty years of his mortal life ! Several obstacles prevented the execution of this design : the principal was the insecurity of the roads, which were so infested by the Arabs, that Ibrahim Aga, governor of Jaffa, had been obliged to march to check their depredations by striking off a few heads. I awaited, therefore, the departure of M. Catafago, which was to take place immediately after the marriage of his nephew, M. Bernard, with the sister-in-law of the Russian consul, now near at hand.

I have already adverted to the high antiquity of Jaffa ; in my fifteenth letter I have told you that, according to a very general opinion, it was founded by Japhet, son of Noah. I have since seen persons who think themselves

authorised by some passage or other in Pliny to date back its origin considerably beyond the deluge.

If I had chanced to come to this town in my youth, or even at a later period, before I was a monk, I should have been very anxious to visit the spot where Andromeda was exposed to the sea-monster ; I should have sought to discover the place of the ring to which the daughter of Cepheus was fastened, and which, according to St. Jerome's account, still existed in his time. But now I see in Jaffa only the town where the apostle who deserved, by his ardent love of Christ, to become the supreme head of the Church, wrought the greatest miracles ; the town where the blessed Virgin embarked for Ephesus with the beloved disciple ; the town to which the disobedient prophet retired, and where he embarked for Cilicia, in order to evade the formal command which the Lord had given him to preach repentance to the inhabitants of Niniveh.

Jaffa is still, as at the time of my visit, occupied by the Egyptian troops. The governor, Ibrahim Aga, whose name I have already had occasion to mention, has just returned with a few horses taken from the Arabs, and several heads, cut off by his soldiers. This Aga commanded at Jaffa for Abdallah ; when Ibrahim Pacha took the town, he was retained in his office. There is not a braver man than Ibrahim Aga : he was formerly a Mameluke, fought desperately against the French at the time of the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon, and was left for dead at the Pyramids. His life has been one incessant battle. Though covered with wounds, he is yet so intrepid, that, with ten of his horse, he never hesitates

to attack a hundred well-mounted and well-armed Arabs. He possesses extraordinary address, and is one of the best horsemen that I know. I have ridden out several times with him and a young Pole, a friend of mine, M. Jaba, chancellor to the Russian consulate, when he was pleased to exhibit his skill in the management of the javelin and the lance.

He is severe and cruel: his mere presence strikes terror. The day before yesterday I was taking a ride with him, when, all at once, he perceived a great number of persons who had approached too near to the gardens infected with the plague: he hastily proceeded towards them, and I followed close at his heels. At the sight of him the people fled as a flock of sheep would from a tiger. He chased the fugitives, and struck several persons whom he overtook. I would have interceded for one unfortunate creature palpitating under his blows, and his face exhibiting the paleness of approaching death; but I was stopped, and I immediately withdrew, vowing not to ride out any more with his excellency.

The wedding, to which I have already alluded, will take place to-morrow. The bridegroom is French, the bride Italian. They will, nevertheless, wear the Turkish costume—the one usually worn by the whole of the consul's family. The bride will have her nails and eyebrows stained, after the fashion of savages—a ridiculous singularity, which the young couple think it right to follow, in order to conform to the customs of the country in which circumstances oblige them to live. In other respects they are persons of piety, and of excellent principles. "I ask of you but one thing," said the bridegroom to

covered with a white veil, which I at first suspected to be a looking-glass. To satisfy myself, I asked what it was. This question of a curiosity perhaps indiscreet, was answered by some one in a manner almost as dry as short: "That belongs to the bride." Madame Catafago, who was not far from me, had heard my question. "Reverend Father," said she, "that veil covers a thing which my niece has always kept in her own room; a thing which has constituted her happiness from childhood; a thing, in short, the sacrifice of which would be more painful to her than any other." As I saw that the good lady wished to make a mystery of it, I said no more: at any rate, I was convinced that it was not a looking-glass. Nevertheless, contrary to all discretion, after supper, I went up to the mysterious object, I lifted a corner of the veil . . . I perceived . . . I will not tell you what . . . Guess . . . and, if you cannot, wait for my next letter.

On returning to my baggage, stretched upon the grass, I mused for a long time before I closed my eyes on what I had seen . . . When I awoke, I mused on it again.

Next day was a most fatiguing one for us. 'The heat was excessive. Scorched by a burning sun, without water to quench our thirst, both men and beasts were exhausted. Less would have sufficed to give us an idea of the desolation of Judea by the calamity of drought, so energetically described by the prophet Joel: "How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture . . . for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burnt all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee; for the rivers of waters are dried up, and

the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness." (Joel, i. 18—20.)

Fortunately for us, we had taken the prudent precaution to provide ourselves with a small stock of oranges. Oh ! how delicious, how refreshing, is the juice of that fruit in such circumstances ! But how ungrateful, how much to be pitied is he, who, before he moistens his parched mouth, does not lift a thankful eye towards heaven !

We were constantly enveloped in a cloud of dust raised by the feet of more than a hundred horses ; it was an annoyance which it was impossible to escape, and which nothing but continual efforts of courage enabled us to endure. My horse was obstinately bent on lying down frequently, and, when he did so, I could not make him rise again without belabouring him with the whip ; and this operation, besides the dislike I felt to it, added to my trouble and fatigue.

We were watched from a distance by the Arabs, who appeared and vanished like lightning before our janisseries.

At length, after a journey of ten hours, overcome with fatigue, we were impatient to discover a place where we could pass the night, and, above all, find water, which we were in urgent want of. We were fortunate enough to meet with both the things we needed, amidst a field of wheat that had been recently cut.

I settled myself, as usual, at some distance from the caravan ; when an accident, that might have caused a great deal of mischief, suddenly filled us with alarm. We were surrounded by fields, still covered with stand-

ing corn. Through the imprudence of a servant, the corn was set on fire, and the flames spread with frightful rapidity; and it was not without the greatest exertions that we succeeded in extinguishing them. I cannot think, without shuddering, of the fatal results which might have attended this accident, if it had occurred during the hours of sleep.

My extreme weariness, however, did not prevent me from thinking of the morrow, which was to be marked by my entry into Nazareth. It was to be a happy day, a holyday, for me. After all my travelling companions were asleep, I was still waking; and the anticipation of my felicity more than once interrupted my short repose.

By two in the morning, my *moucro* (the man who took care of my mules) had already laden my baggage; and I, the first on horseback, hastened our departure as much as possible.

We had been for some time among the hills of Galilee, when, at day-break, we perceived before us the very beautiful and very fertile plain of Esdrelon, or valley of Jesrael, so celebrated in Scripture for the death of Saul and of Josiah, and in modern history for the meeting of the kings of Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Hungary, when they were attempting to reconquer the holy places. This magnificent plain, about twenty leagues in length, or two days' journey, according to the expression of the Arabs, presented to the eye a most enchanting prospect.

On the left extended a chain of hills, between which was discerned Mount Carmel; before us rose Mount Tabor, like an immense and superb dome, above which the sun, already showing half his disk, surrounded by

clouds of gold and crimson, began to pour far around a flood of light.

The air was cool and light. The plain was covered in several places with tents belonging to different tribes of Bedouins, whose numerous herds were pasturing around them. Horsemen appeared at different points, and long trains of camels were carrying large sheaves of wheat.

As these were friendly tribes, all fear of danger was of course at an end; accordingly, most of the soldiers of our escort left us, and we continued our journey with few guards.

I have already had occasion to mention the touching cheerfulness with which the Bedouins exercise hospitality: it would be difficult to carry that virtue to a higher point. Their chiefs came and entreated us most respectfully to permit them to dress a sheep for us; we declined the offer: they appeared mortified at our refusal, though it was accompanied by the expression of our thanks. Some of our people, however, consented to accept some milk. It was a subject of envy and even of pain to such of these good creatures as had nothing to offer, or whose offers were not accepted.

Rumour had preceded Messrs. Catafago and Bernard, senior, and announced their very speedy return to Nazareth, where they resided during part of the summer, and where they were well known. Almost the whole population was in motion to meet them, and to receive the new-married couple with demonstrations of joy. The multitude was headed by a great number of horsemen, magnificently mounted and armed, acting a sham-fight. The hills re-echoed the shouts of joy, and the reports of

muskets and pistols, with which were mingled the sounds of instruments, and particularly the tambourine.

An accident, that might have been serious, suspended the rejoicings for a few moments. The horses manœuvred in unequal and stony roads, where it was difficult to guide them. That of M. Louis Catafago, the consul's eldest son, ran away with him, and suddenly fell in so dangerous a spot that we thought it was all over with him. Fortunately, however, he rose without sustaining any injury, and we came off with the fright.

The nearer we approached, the greater became the concourse: the shouts of joy and the discharges of fire-arms were redoubled. Amid this noisy train was seen the bridegroom, mounted on a splendid Arabian mare, sumptuously caparisoned; for which, by the way, he had refused an offer of fifteen thousand francs. The bride, covered from head to foot with a very richly embroidered veil, was led by two Arabs; her own and her husband's mother, who were about ten paces behind her, wept for joy. Every body, out of respect, kept at a distance from them.

All this rejoicing, however, all the pomp of the scene before me, did not cause me to forget that I was a pilgrim, and only a league from the august spot where the WORD became flesh: I had constantly kept at as great a distance as I could; and, the nearer we approached, the more I slackened my pace. At length I stopped altogether, waiting till the multitude should be at such a distance that I could not hear its noise. I then pursued my route, and entered Nazareth bare-headed. Father Perpetuus, secretary of the Holy Land, who had arrived



from Jerusalem a few hours before, having perceived me from the platform of the convent, hastened down to the door and threw himself into my arms.

I expressed to him my desire to proceed forthwith to the church : he cheerfully conducted me thither ; and there, on the very spot of the Incarnation, I spent my first moments in adoring Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, blessed for ever.

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### LETTER XXXVIII.

**ILLNESS—VERMIN—PLAGUE—NAZARETH—POPULATION—CHURCH—SANCTUARY OF THE INCARNATION—ST. LOUIS—JOSEPH'S WORKSHOP—SYNAGOGUE FROM WHICH JESUS WAS DRIVEN BY THE JEWS—STONE TABLE AT WHICH HE SOMETIMES ATE WITH HIS DISCIPLES—ROCK FROM WHICH THE JEWS DESIGNED TO THROW HIM—RUINS OF A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO THE VIRGIN MARY—ENVIRONS OF NAZARETH—ENORMOUS WOLF—MARY'S WELL—MARY'S FOUNTAIN—ANECDOTE—EXCURSION TO MOUNT TABOR—ADMIRABLE VIEW—EXPLANATION OF THE ENIGMA IN THE LAST LETTER—REJOICING OF THE CHRISTIANS FOR THE TAKING OF ST. JEAN D'ACRE.**

Nazareth, June 10, 1832.

I have been ill, my dear friend. I was silly enough to leave my bed-room windows open at night, and have paid rather dearly for that imprudence, which is more dangerous here than anywhere else. To-day I am better ; but still I am afraid that I have not quite got over it. I continue to feel an extraordinary lassitude, which the want of rest tends to keep up.

The bugs seem to conspire with other vermin, innumerable in this country, to disturb your slumbers, or rather to prevent you from closing your eyes. The na-

tives, though having habitually to endure this species of annoyance, are themselves not accustomed to it: they complain of it as of a plague. Nothing, however, would be easier than to rid themselves of it. The means are simple and attainable alike by the poor and the rich—cleanliness. But, in regard to this point, the utmost degree of indolence universally prevails; and some even entertain a sort of commiseration for these swarms of enemies, which is almost incredible, and which makes them even scruple to destroy them. “What are you doing, brother?”—“Shaking my cloak to get rid of the insects that annoy me.”—“But why don’t you kill them?”—“Ah! poor things! I can’t help pitying them!”—And yet such people lament and complain!

The plague has broken out at Jaffa: it is also making great havoc at Bethlehem and Rama; and it has appeared at Jerusalem, but with less violence. It is said that Beyrout is not free from it, and that this terrible scourge is spreading in the island of Cyprus. We are threatened with it. Shall we be able to escape? I resign myself to the holy and adorable will of God, who strikes and who saves as he sees fit.

Nazareth, which the inhabitants consider as a handsome, well-built place, in comparison with the other towns of this country, is, in reality, but a mean and wretched village. The houses, in general small, are irregularly grouped on the slope and at the foot of a hill, which rises amphitheatrically and overlooks it. The most considerable edifices are:—the monastery, a handsome, extensive structure, built with extreme solidity; an ancient Christian church, converted by the Turks into a

mosque ; and a very large and commodious *khan*, at the entrance of the town by the Jaffa road.

There are to be seen, besides, a few private houses, which are tolerably well built, and lead you to infer that the owners are in easy circumstances.

The population amounts to about three thousand. It is composed of catholics, Maronites, schismatic Greeks, and Turks. The first are the most numerous. One thing surprised me much, that is, the mild manners of the Turks, and the kindness which they show towards the catholics, whom they treat like brothers.

The church is in the interior of the convent. The jealousy of the Turks and the tyranny of the governors prevented its being finished at the time of its erection ; and to this cause must be ascribed the disproportion that exists between its length and its width ; a disproportion which shocks the eye the moment you enter. In other respects it is very handsome, and kept remarkably clean.

This church encloses the ever-blessed spot where the ineffable mystery of mercy and salvation, the divine mystery of the incarnation, took place. Thither it was that "the angel Gabriel was sent from God . . . . to a virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph : and the virgin's name was Mary;" and where he announced to her that she should conceive and bear a son, and should call his name Jesus.

You descend to the place where Mary was, by a wide and magnificent staircase of white marble. Like all the other sanctuaries in Palestine, this has an altar erected over it, upon which lamps are kept continually burning. On a slab, likewise of marble, are inscribed in large

letters these memorable words ; the most energetic expression of the infinite love of God for mankind :

VERBUM CARO HIC FACTUM EST.

Behind the altar are two rooms, hewn out of the rock, which formed part of the house of St. Joseph. A mere glance is sufficient to convince any one that this is a work of ancient times. The two rooms, together, are twenty feet long and ten wide. The first communicates with the second by a few steps of unequal breadth. In the latter stands an altar, surmounted by an ordinary picture, representing the Holy Family ; and upon it is inscribed :

HIC ERAT SUBDITUS ILLIS.

In front was constructed another room, which must have been seventeen or eighteen feet in length, and eight or nine in breadth. It was this building which, according to a pious tradition, was carried by angels, at first, to Dalmatia, towards the end of the 13th century ; and, some years afterwards, to Loretto in Italy. On the spot from which it was removed now stand two altars, one on the right, the other on the left, separated by the great staircase leading to the sanctuary.

There are still to be found at Nazareth houses resembling Joseph's ; that is to say, small, low, and communicating in the rear with a grotto, excavated in the side of the hill.

The church of Nazareth is certainly, of all the temples in the world, that which excites the warmest, the tenderest, devotion for the blessed Virgin. Her image is seen every where. The catholic does not pluck a flower but he offers it to Mary, and deposits it on her altar.

On all sides appear inscriptions in honour of her. On every door, on every wall, you read the words : **ALL HAIL, MARY.** In short, that sweet name meets you every where.

In the choir of the Franciscan Fathers there is a picture, of large dimensions, representing the Virgin. Though it is not by a skilful hand, the effect is admirable and most graceful. The painter has imparted to the face an expression so gentle and so touching, that, after long pausing to contemplate it for the first time, you presently return to look at it again. It is to the feet of this image that the catholics of Nazareth come, every day, to offer the tribute of their prayers to her whom they consider as being in an especial manner their protectress. Having witnessed their pious solicitude to perform this duty, I could not help wishing that the picture were removed to some other part of the church, where the concourse would not disturb or interfere with the exercises of divine worship. The choir, at the farther end of which it is now placed, is very narrow, and, as every body has a right to go into it, even while the monks are performing the service, the consequence is a bustle which cannot but disturb and sometimes interrupt the singing and the ceremonies. The Arab, moreover, is accustomed to pray aloud ; he always accompanies his prayer with groans, and strikes his bosom ; and to those in the choir this is as serious an inconvenience as the other. But, were it merely that almost continual succession of men, women, and children, incessantly passing and repassing before the good Fathers, this would be more than suffi-

cient to distract, perhaps even to disconcert, the most serious piety.

St. Helena caused the first church of any in the East to be erected at Nazareth, and had the sacred places which I have just described inclosed in it. A pillar marked the spot where the angel Gabriel accosted Mary; and another, two feet from it, pointed out that where the Virgin then was. Nothing of the church is left, save a few fragments, indicative of its grandeur; but the first of the two pillars subsists entire. The other was broken by wretches who fancied that there were treasures within it. Near the sanctuary is still to be seen the upper part of it, which, from some unknown cause, by many deemed miraculous, remains suspended from the roof.

In 1251, on the feast of the Annunciation, the 25th of March, St. Louis, the most virtuous of the kings of France, came to receive the communion at the foot of the altar, erected close to these pillars.

“He arrived,” say the historians, “on the eve of the annunciation of our lady, at Cana, in Galilee, wearing a rough hair-cloth next his skin; thence he went to Mount Tabor, and came the same day to Nazareth. As soon as he perceived that village at a distance, he alighted from his horse and fell on his knees, in adoration of that holy place, where the mystery of our redemption was accomplished. He walked thither on foot, though he was extremely fatigued, and had fasted all day on bread and water. On the following day he caused the whole of the divine service to be performed; that is to say, matins, mass, and vespers. He received the sacrament from the

hands of the legate, who delivered a very affecting sermon on this occasion; so that, according to the remark made by the confessor of that pious prince, in a writing wherein he acquaints us with these particulars, it might be affirmed that, since the mystery of the incarnation was accomplished at Nazareth, never had God been honoured there with more devotion and edification than he was on that day.”\*

At the distance of one hundred and thirty or forty paces was the house in which Mary's husband followed his trade of carpenter. The place is still designated by the appellation of St. Joseph's workshop. This workshop was transformed into a spacious church, part of which has been destroyed by the Turks: a chapel, which belonged to it, is still left, and there mass is performed every day. Above the altar is a very indifferent picture, representing Joseph at work and assisted by Jesus. It was a present from a noble lady in Florence, who has not omitted to affix to it her name and her arms.

Not far off is the synagogue where Jesus was teaching when he was driven from it by the Jews, and taken to the top of the hill, from which they intended to throw him.

“And he came,” says St. Luke, (iv. 16—36) “to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read.

\* *Histoire de France*, by Daniel, tom. lii, p. 301; and *Histoire ecclésiastique*, tom. xvii. p. 453. Fleury calls the legate Endes de Châteauroux. He adds that the king was always provided with costly dresses of different colours, according to the solemnities; and that he took particular care of them.

“And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias, and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

“The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor : he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised ;

“To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

“And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down : and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

“And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. . . . .

“And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

“And rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

“But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way.”

This synagogue, where Jesus was so sacrilegiously ill-treated, is a vaulted building, of hewn stone, about thirty feet long and fifteen or sixteen wide. It belongs to the schismatic Greeks, who have converted it into a church. The Franciscan Fathers have possession of it, and go thither to say mass.

Three hundred paces from the synagogue is a chapel, in which is enclosed a mass of rock, of irregular shape, about twelve feet long, and nine or ten in its greatest breadth, on which it is believed that our Saviour some-



times took his meals with his disciples. A Latin inscription informs us that, according to tradition, at this stone, called the table of Christ, our Lord ate with his disciples, both before and after his resurrection.

**TRADITIO CONTINUA EST ET NUNQUAM INTERRUPTA APUD OMNES NATIONES ORIENTALES, HANC PETRAM, DICTUM MENSA CHRISTI, ILLAM IPSAM ESSE PETRAM, SUPRA QUAM DOMINUS NOSTER JESUS CHRISTUS CUM SUIS DISCIPULIS COMEDIT ANTE ET POST SUAM RESURRECTIONEM A MORTUIS.**

I wished to see the steep rock from which the Jews purposed to cast Jesus Christ. I went thither yesterday, and set out rather late, to avoid the heat of a scorching sun. I had no doubt that my guide was perfectly well acquainted with the localities: on the contrary, he needed a guide himself; he took me to a wrong place. We had before us an extremely high rock, whose top seemed to be lost in the clouds: he pretended that this was the very spot that I wished to see. To no purpose I declared that, according to all that I had been told, and all that I had read, this was not the place; I was obliged to follow him; and there was I, clambering up slowly and with great effort, holding sometimes by projections of the rock, sometimes by roots and shrubs, that I might not tumble into the abyss.

On reaching the top, my man confessed that he was wrong, and that the place to which he should have led me was much lower down. Accordingly, on looking that way, I readily discovered it from the description that had been given me. We experienced great difficulties and incurred the greatest dangers in our way to it.

Though I found myself behind some stones, which form a sort of parapet, yet, when I cast my eyes down the precipice, I could not help shuddering. Some writers have asserted that a rapid torrent runs roaring at the foot of it. No torrent ever was there, and I can add that, not only is that place destitute of water, but that it is very scarce in the environs. On one of the stones of the parapet, I remarked the print of a hand. I know not what is its origin, and no one could give me any information concerning it. At the foot of the rock is an altar, at which the Franciscan Fathers, on a certain day, perform a mass, the gospel of which is that passage of St. Luke, which I have quoted above.

In returning to Nazareth, you perceive, about half way, upon a hill, the ruins of a monastery, formerly occupied by nuns; and those of a very handsome church, built by St. Helena, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary, by the name of *Our Lady de Tremore*, of Fright. According to some, Mary was already at this place when the Jews dragged her son to the top of the hill, with the intention of throwing him down from it. According to others, on hearing of the murderous designs of those furious men, she had run out in haste, but had arrived too late, and, seized with fright, was unable to go any further. And the holy and excellent mother of Constantine resolved that a religious monument, erected through her means, should commemorate the profound grief of the holiest, the fondest of mothers.

The environs of Nazareth are frequented by wild beasts; wolves and jackals, especially, are very numerous: it is rarely the case that in an evening you do not meet with

some of these animals, near the town. They frequently come in troops, during the night, to devour the dead beasts lying in the streets; they disturb the sleep of the inhabitants by their frightful yells, which the dogs, whose number is very considerable, fail not to answer by their loud barking; and thus, between them, they produce a most distressing and stunning noise. As we were returning, one of these dangerous neighbours passed very close to us: it was a prodigious wolf. Luckily, he was more frightened at sight of us than we were at him.

A quarter of a league distant, is a well, called Mary's. It is now enclosed in the church of the schismatic Greeks, who have erected an altar close to it. Tradition relates that Mary was accustomed to go thither for what water she wanted; and, to convince one's self that this must have been the case, it is sufficient to consider, as I have already remarked, that water is very scarce, both at Nazareth and in the environs.

The road leading thither, bordered with nopals and fruit-trees, forms a charming walk, which the prospect of the neighbouring hills and the fields, covered with corn, renders still more picturesque.

The water of this well, increased by that of another spring, constantly overflows, and runs into a spacious reservoir, constructed a hundred paces farther off, and called Mary's fountain: it is thither that most of the inhabitants go to fetch it. Unfortunately, it is not very abundant, and a week seldom passes but the eagerness of the throng occasions quarrels and broken pitchers. These pitchers are enormous earthen vessels, of disproportionate height. The women of Nazareth carry them

on their heads ; and, under this heavy load, sometimes having also a child in their arms, they walk with a lightness that is astonishing.

Father Perpetuus was with me, a few days since, at this fountain ; he wished, out of devotion, to drink of its water, and asked a woman for some, who readily gratified him. I drank in my turn, and I thought it right to express my thanks by offering this woman a piece of money. She peremptorily refused it, and even appeared offended, to judge from the significant gestures which she addressed to her neighbours. I was the more surprised, as it was the first time that I had met with a refusal from an Arab. At first I admired her behaviour, and remarked its delicacy to the good Father, not doubting that she had complained because I could think her capable of taking payment for a draught of water. As, however, she continued to grumble, and, after all, the politeness with which I had made my offer seemed to furnish a good excuse, I determined to ascertain what it was that caused her to talk in such an animated tone. We called an interpreter, and soon learned that, not accustomed to have money given her for such a service, she imagined that I had offered her my piece as the price of her pitcher, which she valued at a great deal more. When she was informed that my intention merely was to give her a *bakschisch*, her anger was changed into thanks.

Next day, I took a walk to the same place. All strove to be first to offer me their pitchers ; but I gave them to understand, by my signs, that I was not thirsty.

On Ascension-day, two Fathers of the Holy Land set

out from the monastery, at one in the morning, for Mount Tabor, in order to perform mass there. I accompanied them. Two guides went before us. We were all on horseback: a mule carried the things required for the ceremony.

We passed Mary's fountain; a concourse of people was already there.

The road was unequal and stony; and, consequently, more difficult for me than for the others: with my short-sighted eyes I could scarcely discern the head of my horse in the dark. I was obliged, therefore, to trust entirely to his instinct: fortunately for me, he was a steady animal and accustomed to these roads.

At sun-rise, Tabor met our view, apparently quite near, though we were still at a considerable distance from it. To us, it seemed to be totally isolated. Behind it, however, at the western part of its base, rises a very high hill, but it is not perceived when you come from Jaffa and descend from the hills of Galilee into the plain of Esdrelon. Our guides took us through fields of corn: the observations of the good Fathers, and the severe reproaches added by me, made no impression upon them; they assured us that there was no other way, and we followed without believing them.

The sun had been for some hours above the horizon when we arrived at the foot of Tabor. It was a magnificent morning; a sweet and profound calm pervaded the country; the ground was yet damp with dew; a great number of birds were fluttering and singing about us; and the grass was so high that it came up to our horses' chests. We halted at Debora, a small village,

built on the very spot where Sisera, after being defeated by the army of Israel, was killed by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, to whose tent he had fled : and thence we contemplated, for a few moments, the scene of the miraculous victory gained by her whose name is still borne by the place where we were.

We now began to ascend the mountain. The sides of the Tabor are unequal, rugged, steep, covered with odoriferous trees and shrubs, which spring up out of the interstices of the rocks : wherever grass can grow, the ground is carpeted with verdure and flowers. The paths are almost impracticable, and, stanch as the horses may be, they have the greatest difficulty to get over some of the most dangerous passes. My mare fell in one of these places, in such a manner that I was, I may say, under her. I kept my seat, pressing her flanks : she rose with me, and, thanks be to Heaven ! where I might have been crushed to death, I received not a scratch.

At length we reached the summit. The writers who have asserted that it terminates in the form of a sugar-loaf, are mistaken. The top is a platform, about half a league in diameter, where you meet with nothing but very high grass, briars, shrubs, small copses on the most elevated points, and enormous piles of stones, the ruins of the churches erected by command of St. Helena to commemorate the mystery which was accomplished there. Game abounds every where. The woody places and the hollows of the rocks afford retreats to panthers, wild boars, and other beasts.

Forcing our way with great toil through brambles, thorns, and thick underwood, we came to a chapel in

ruins, the only one that is now left. The community at Nazareth go thither on pilgrimage every year, on the day of the Transfiguration, to perform mass, and to chant the following Gospel :

“ And Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

“ And was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

“ And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

“ Then answered Peter and said, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.

“ While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said : This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.

“ And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.

“ And Jesus came and touched them, and said : Arise, and be not afraid.

“ And when they had lift up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

“ And, as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying : Tell the vision to no man until the son of man be risen again from the dead.”—(Matth. xvii. 1—9.)

St. Matthew, as you see, from the passage that I have quoted, has not named the mountain on which this vision

took place ; he merely observes that it was high ; and no more is told us by St. Mark and St. Luke. Some have conjectured that the transfiguration occurred on the mountain of Cæsarea Philippi ; and have assigned for a reason, the too great distance between the place from which Jesus took his apostles and Tabor. But this opinion is neither the most received nor the most ancient. From the earliest ages, the contrary tradition has been current ; and, on this account, the churches and the monastery built by St. Helena on the summit of the Tabor were called the churches and the monastery of the Three Tabernacles.

I confessed myself at the foot of a tree, and had the happiness to communicate at the mass which was said beneath the canopy of heaven. After mass, the Gospel was solemnly chanted.

The summit of the Tabor is sometimes so shrouded in fogs, that it is difficult to distinguish even the nearest objects ; the spectator is then deprived of the most magnificent view in the world. Fortunately for me, the sky was serene and cloudless, and the weather heavenly.

To the south extended, for the space of fifteen leagues, at least, the theatre upon which Jesus displayed his infinite beneficence by so many miracles. I cast my eyes upon it : moved, affected, my soul filled with recollections, I paused to contemplate it. The immense plain of Esdrelon, from the patches of verdure which mark its best cultivated spots, looks like a prodigious draught-board. A few leagues beyond it, I saw Mount Hermon, at the foot of which is situated the village of Naim, celebrated for the resurrection of the widow's son ; still



farther, Mount Gilboa ; at bottom, Endor, whither Saul sent to consult the witch ; and, quite in the background, as the last point of the perspective, the hills of Samaria.

Towards the north, the lake of Nazareth, or sea of Tiberias ; the mount on which Jesus addressed his admirable sermon to his disciples ; the plain where he fed five thousand persons with five loaves and two fishes ; Cana, where he performed his first miracle ; and, in the distance, the Mediterranean, presented a picture not less enchanting.

We descended from the Tabor on foot, leading our horses by the bridle, and proceeding cautiously, lest we should meet with wild beasts, the traces of which we had discovered, and which one of our companions even thought that he had perceived among the bushes. On coming to the corn-field through which we had passed in the morning, our guide avoided it, and made us turn into a path on the left. I took it into my head to ascribe the respect which he showed this time for the property of another to the salutary effect of my rebuke : but I was wrong. He had caught a glimpse of some Turkish mowers, cutting down the corn in the field, and their presence had made him apprehend a more severe and more painful lesson than our reprimands. This we did not fail to remark to him. Alas ! how infatuated is man ! when doing wrong, he is afraid of being seen by other men who might punish him for it, regardless of that eye which penetrates through the thickest darkness, the eye of Him who will *infallibly* punish. .

I was going to close my letter, my dear friend, without giving you the explanation of the riddle that I pro-

posed in my last relative to the veiled frame which I had seen in the tent of the new-married lady, and which she took along with her wherever she went, determined never to part from it. Perhaps you have guessed it? But, if you still need enlightening, it was a beautiful picture of the mother of Jesus Christ, the kind and tender mother of us all! Farewell!

P.S. Acre has just surrendered. I hear the reports of muskets fired in token of rejoicing. Among the Christians there are many who shout for joy, in the hope of being rescued from oppression. Will this be the case? And is then their happiness ensured because a rebellious subject has unjustly taken a town from his master?

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### LETTER XXXIX.

**OFFICERS OF THE AUSTRIAN FRIGATE, LA GUERRIERE—THE JORDAN—LAKE OF GENESARETH—CAPERNAUM—TIBERIAS; PLAGUE THERE—ENCAMPMENT OUT OF THE TOWN—SYNAGOGUE—POPULATION OF TIBERIAS—EXPECTATION OF THE MESSIAH—CATHOLIC CHURCH AT TIBERIAS—DESERT WHERE JESUS MIRACULOUSLY FED THE MULTITUDE—MOUNTAIN OF THE BEATITUDES—CANA; SITE OF THE HOUSE WHERE THE MARRIAGE WAS HELD—RETURN TO NAZARETH—DEPARTURE OF THE OFFICERS OF THE FRIGATE—THE PLAGUE BREAKS OUT AT NAZARETH—THE CONVENT CLOSED—CONDUCT OF THE FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES DURING THE PLAGUE.**

Nazareth, June 20, 1832.

A few days ago, fatigued by an indisposition, from which I have scarcely recovered, I retired to bed at an earlier hour than usual. I slept soundly for some time. It was not yet midnight, when an extraordinary noise suddenly awoke me: people were running to and fro, talking, shouting; the whole monastery was in a bustle,

and, from the confused sounds that reached me, I was unable to guess the cause. Apprehensive that some accident had happened, I rose in haste, and ran and questioned the first person I met. I was told that the house was full of foreigners. “Foreigners! and from what country?”—“They are Austrians.”—Austrians at Nazareth! and in great numbers!—the thing appeared incredible to me. It was, nevertheless, true.

They were the officers of the frigate, *La Guerrière*, commanded by Commodore Baron Accourti, which had anchored at Caiffa. They had obtained permission to visit Nazareth, set out rather late, and performed the journey on pack-horses, which had rendered their progress slower and more fatiguing. As there was a great scarcity of beds, I hastened instantly to the superior, and begged him to dispose of mine; I then went down to the refectory, where I found the gentlemen taking supper with an excellent appetite. My name was not unknown to them: one of them, indeed, was an officer with whom I had had frequent intercourse at Vienna. A conversation, the most frank and the most cordial, immediately commenced. As I had been some weeks at Nazareth, I paid them, in some measure, the attentions of a host, and offered them every thing that I could command. Several proposed to go to Jerusalem, which they longed to see. I informed them that the plague was raging there, as well as in several other towns of Judea; and they relinquished their design. I advised them to make themselves amends for this disappointment by an excursion into Galilee, which was well worthy of their notice, and could not fail to interest their curiosity. Though still

ailing, I thought that I could not help promising to accompany them. They accepted my offer with joy. The party was arranged for the next day, and, meanwhile, we retired to take a few hours' rest.

Very early next morning, we went to the residence of M. Catafago, the Austrian vice-consul, to request him to procure for us the requisite number of horses; and I set out immediately, with the young baron Accourti, lieutenant of La Guerrière, M. de Kissinger, M. Catafago's eldest son, and some other officers belonging to the frigate. Our cavalcade, including janissaries and servants, consisted of about twenty-five persons.

We proceeded first to Mount Tabor, which it gave me real joy to see again. It was not lighted by so brilliant a day as it was at the time of my former visit: but, though the weather was less favourable, still it permitted us to distinguish the places most worthy of remark. My companions were not less struck than myself with the beauty, the grandeur, of the scene that expanded itself to their view. Some, lifting their eyes to heaven, and fixing them stedfastly upon it, exclaimed, with a deeply religious feeling: "Thence it was that issued those divine words: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!'" And I was not less moved than if I had heard the celestial voice uttering them. It seemed as if Jesus was in the midst of us. I said: "It is good to be here;" and these words rang in the recesses of my heart.

In descending, we took the road that leads to the Jordan. We were about six or seven leagues from that river. At noon, we halted under some trees of a mean

garden, to take a little refreshment, and to rest our horses. We then resumed our march, and soon found ourselves in an extremely fertile country. We met with none but Arabs, busily engaged in harvesting their crops, or gaily singing airs of their own country beside their camels.

It was four o'clock when, from the top of a hill which we were about to descend, we perceived in the plain the lake of Tiberias and the Jordan, which runs through without mingling with it, and proceeds, after long windings, to discharge itself into the Dead Sea.\*

The lake presents one of the most imposing sights in the Holy Land. In the mind of every one at all acquainted with sacred history, it awakens recollections so numerous and so grand, that the imagination is overpowered and deeply moved by them. But, independently of the wonderful events connected with this lake, it cannot fail to produce a strong impression by its natural beauty: it is, I may say, a miniature of the lake of Geneva; but a miniature the more precious, since the country is almost destitute of springs, and wells are very rare in it.

The descent leading to the Jordan is long and rapid. No sooner were we on the banks of the river, than every one was calling to mind the miracles which had rendered it celebrated. One mentioned Joshua passing through it, dry-shod, at the head of the people of God; another, Elijah and Elisha striking the waters with their cloaks, and thus opening themselves a way across; a third, the same

\* According to some writers, the lake of Tiberias is not only fed but formed by the Jordan.

Elisha bringing to the surface, by the power of his word, the head of the hatchet, dropped into the river by one of the sons of the prophets; but most, the preaching of John the Baptist, the baptism of our Saviour, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Lamb of God, who hath taken away the sins of the world, &c. Each then thought of marking his visit to the river by some act, or taking with him some memorial of it. Some bathed in it; others filled bottles with its water; this picked up small pebbles; that, seated on a hillock, took out his pencil to draw a view. For my part, after quenching my thirst by a draught of the sacred water, I went to rest myself under an arch of a ruined bridge, near which Messrs. Accourti, Kissinger, Schultz, and the surgeon of the frigate, were bathing. There the Jordan is not deep, but rapid as in the rest of its course. Reflecting that, among all the pilgrims whom devotion brings thither every year, there is not one but deems it a sort of religious duty to plunge into the stream, I felt an irresistible desire to avail myself of this occasion, and, though still unwell, was preparing to strip and join those gentlemen, when I was prevented by the formal prohibition of the surgeon.

Several Arabs, mounted on camels, crossed from one bank to the other: I counted their steps. If I am not mistaken, it took about two hundred in this place, where the Jordan appeared to me wider than any where else, except at its mouth. Six hundred paces beyond the ruins of the bridge where we were, it issues from the lake, and is then not more than forty or fifty feet broad at most. The water is excellent.

Among the incidents of our stay near the river, there is one which I should be sorry to omit relating to you. It has taught me one of the most useful lessons that one can receive in life — not to be too hasty in forming opinions, and, above all, not to hazard them upon mere appearances.

One of the officers who were with us was a man esteemed by all for his bravery. But, though in his conduct and his language he was as reserved as any of the other persons belonging to the frigate, yet, from certain airs, certain manners, I ventured secretly to infer that he was much more courageous than devout. I was near him at the moment when he was going to bathe. He committed to my care a small medallion, which he carried hanging about his neck, telling me that he valued it very highly. What was my surprise, on looking at it, to see an image of the Blessed Virgin, most admirably executed. I asked him where that sweet, that lovely, portrait was painted. “At Venice,” he replied; “and such is my attachment to it that a million piastres would not tempt me to part from it.” — “A million piastres!” I repeated; “and yet methinks that sum would be a very strong temptation.” — “No matter,” replied he, with a wholly Christian vivacity, “no matter!”

Mounting our horses again, we proceeded towards the lake of Tiberias; we soon arrived at its banks, along which we rode for the space of three leagues.

This lake, to which the Hebrews gave the appellation of pond, or even sea, as they did to all bodies of water of any extent, was at first called lake of Gennereth, of Genesareth or Genesar, denominations which, though

differing, designated but one and the same town, one and the same district, at the southern extremity. It was likewise called the sea of Galilee, because it was bordered on the north and east by that province. It did not assume the name of Tiberias, till Herod had caused that town to be built, on the site, it is said, of Genesareth, in honour of Tiberius, on the elevation of that prince to the empire.

“The water of the lake of Genesareth,” says Josephus, the historian, “is very good to drink, and very easy to get at, because its shore is composed of very fine gravel. It is so cold as not to lose its coldness, when the natives of the country, according to their custom, set it in the sun in order to warm it during the most intense heat of summer. It contains a quantity of different sorts of fish, which are not met with elsewhere.

“The country,” he adds, “which surrounds the lake and bears the same name, is admirable for its beauty and fertility. There are no plants which Nature has not rendered it capable of growing, and the art and industry of the inhabitants have not failed to turn this advantage to good account. The air is so temperate that it is suited to all sorts of fruit : you there meet with abundance of walnut-trees, which affect very cold countries ; and those which need more warmth, as the palm, and a mild and temperate air, as the fig and the olive, equally find there what they want ; so that it seems as if Nature, by an effort of her love for this beautiful country, had delighted to bring together contrary things, and that all the seasons vie with one another in favouring this happy land. For it not only produces so many excellent fruits,



but they keep there so long that you may eat grapes and figs for ten months, and other fruits the whole year round."\*

Such was its condition at the time when Josephus wrote, that is, soon after Vespasian had defeated the Jews in a naval fight on this very lake. Since then, no country, perhaps, has undergone a greater change, in regard to what depends on the labour and industry of man. Nature, no doubt, is still the same; but the oppression under which the inhabitants live, and the absence of all cultivation, give it in several parts all the appearances of sterility.

The surrounding hills, now destitute of trees and verdure, still present points of view that are, it is true, very fine, but dull and wild. Of the towns and villages, once so populous and flourishing, which embellished the shores of the lake, scarcely a few miserable ruins are now remaining.

You look on the west side for that Capernaum, of old so wealthy and so flourishing, which, for its prosperity, deserved a name, said by the interpreters to signify Land of Consolation or Joy—that Capernaum, which Jesus called *his town*; which he favoured in vain by so many and such great miracles: and the only traces that you find of its ancient splendour are rubbish, pieces of capitals, fragments of pillars. You feel that the wrath of God has passed over it, and that the anathema is accomplished: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for, if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been

\* Josephus's "War of the Jews," book iii. c. 35.

done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.”  
(Matt. xi. 23.)

Gerasa, or Gergesa, peopled of old by Jews, Greeks, and Syrians, and destroyed by the troops of Vespasian; Mageddon, ruined also by the Romans; Bethsaida and Chorazin, cursed by our Saviour, now present nought but heaps of stones, or mean huts, inhabited by Arabs.

On the other side of the lake are still to be seen some grottoes, excavated in the rock. These were ancient tombs mentioned in Scripture. St. Mark says :—

“ And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

“ And when he was come down out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the *tombs* a man with an unclean spirit,

“ Who had his dwelling among the *tombs*, and no man could bind him, no, not with chains. . . . .

“ And always night and day he was in the mountains, and in the *tombs*, crying, and cutting himself with stones.” (Mark, v. 1 — 5.)

This lake, though stripped, as I have just told you, of the towns, the villages, and the magnificent houses which embellished it two thousand years ago, and in spite of the nakedness of the hills which surround it, still wears, even at this day, a most delightful aspect. Bordered every where with rose-laurels, which droop their tufted and flowery branches over the calm surface of its limpid waters, it exhibits the charming image of an immense mirror, having for its frame a garland of verdure and flowers.

The impression produced by this pleasing prospect was

rapidly effaced from my mind by the recollection of the events of which these parts were the theatre. Here it was that the most bloody battle, and the most fatal to the Christian cause of any recorded in the annals of the East, was fought on the 2nd of July, 1137. From the tops of these hills Saladin's troops poured with the impetuosity of a torrent upon the Christian army, drawn into the plain. There, after a fight of two whole days with the forces of the infidels, having to struggle with hunger, thirst, and all sorts of privations, that army was cut in pieces, and lost all the fruit of the numerous exploits which had till then maintained and secured its conquests. There it had to endure all sorts of calamities, all sorts of mortifications ; the sword, fire, the loss of the true cross, the slaughter of its most valiant leaders, the capture of its king ; and, if we may believe several contemporary chroniclers, to crown its misfortunes, it had to number among the principal causes of all these disasters the perfidy and treachery of one of its captains, on whose fidelity it had the greatest right to rely. " Those fields were strewed with the bodies of the Christians ; those furrows were drenched with their blood, which flowed there like rain, as Saladin himself says ; and their scattered limbs, their dried bones, were left nearly a year above ground unburied, attesting at once the triumph and the ferocity of the conqueror."

Following the shore, we arrived at Tiberias, which gave name to the battle that I have just been adverting to.

Walls flanked with towers, and washed by the waters of the lake, give it the appearance of a fortress ; but, as

you approach, you soon perceive that those ramparts would not resist a cannon-shot. A soldier was sitting, all alone, at the gate of the town. We halted before the house of an acquaintance of M. Catafago's, and, having alighted, he, M. Accourti and myself, went in. I had a letter of recommendation for a young Arab : I directed a servant to go and deliver it immediately. Our attendants began to unsaddle our horses and to carry in our baggage, when the person to whom I was recommended came in. He asked for the master of the house and, with an anxious look, and in a loud and animated voice, said a few words to him which I did not understand. I requested M. Catafago to explain them. "Why," said he, with the utmost composure, "the plague has made its appearance in the town : it has already carried off two persons. "But," continued he, "don't be alarmed ; we shall start again to-morrow."—"Not alarmed !" I exclaimed ; "and not start till to-morrow ! No, no, we must be gone this very instant !"

Thereupon I went out to order the horses not to be put up. Our guides remonstrated ; they told me that the poor beasts were quite jaded. I replied in such a manner as to show that I would be obeyed, and immediately went to acquaint the persons of our caravan with the danger that we had to apprehend. In a quarter of an hour we had passed out at the same gate by which we had entered.

No sooner were we outside than we held a council. It was decided that we should go about a cannon-shot farther, and rest ourselves in a recently cleared corn-field.

On our arrival there I took the precaution to place the horses and the baggage quite close to us, and to post sentinels in such a manner as to prevent the approach of any person whatsoever from the town. As for the provisions and other articles, which necessity forced us to receive, we purified them carefully with water. It was agreed that, when the moon rose, which would be about midnight, we should pursue our journey.

As it was still broad day-light, we presently had numerous visitors. Our guards, adhering to their orders, took care to keep back, to the distance of eight or ten paces, all who came to our little camp. Among these were several Jews, who, to my extreme surprise, without having ever set foot in Germany, spoke German perfectly. It gave me real pleasure to chat with them a few moments. I knew not that persons of their nation formed two-thirds of the population of Tiberias ; and that they had skilful masters, who taught them our language. According to their account, a great many of them are descended from families settled on the same spot, at the time of Jesus Christ. So much is certain, that their synagogue is considered as the first in the East; and that their rabbis are reputed to be very learned. Foreign professors of their religion throng to their town, under the influence of the same feeling of devotion which impels so many to go to Jerusalem. Hither they repair from all parts of the world, with the intention of ending their days in this place. A tradition, generally accredited among them, declares that Christ will come from Capernaum to Tiberias : they are expecting him ; and I have been told that the most zealous of them post themselves, in turn, on an

elevated spot, and there, keeping their eyes constantly fixed on the ruins of the town from which the Messiah is to come, they stand sentry, in order to be the first to proclaim his happy advent. Nay, in reference to this expectation, I have heard a story of a wag, who, having at night fastened a number of lamps to a crazy boat which happened to be upon the lake, at a considerable distance from the port, made it move towards the town, on which all the Jews set out to meet the "desired of the nations." The tumult was great, added my informant, and the joy still greater, till the moment when the illusion was dispelled by the sad reality.

We were in want of water : an Arab belonging to our retinue was sent to fetch some from the lake, which was not far from the spot where we were. Apprehensive lest he might commit some imprudence, I thought it right to follow him; and well it was that I did so. He took care, it is true, to shun the approach of men ; but he quietly filled his skin, fifteen or twenty paces from the carcase of a horse, which, being above the level of the water, diffused around a most poisonous stench. I insisted that he should empty his skin immediately, and go two hundred paces higher to fill it again ; after which I escorted him back, watching him as closely as though he had been a prisoner.

On my return to the camp, I found supper ready. It was a frugal one, and seasoned by a good appetite. The boldest of us was glad that they had not uselessly defied the contagion. For my part, I congratulated myself the more for having occasioned our prompt departure ; since it would have been most painful to me, if, in consequence

of intercourse so difficult to be avoided in a town visited by the plague, the lives of the officers of the frigate, or those of the Fathers of the monastery to which I was returning, had been endangered. From all that I have had occasion to remark, there needs so little to propagate this terrible calamity, that it appears to me scarcely possible to escape it without absolute seclusion.

It was not, however, without regret that I found myself obliged to relinquish my intention of seeing Tiberias. I knew that Herod Agrippa had made it a large and handsome town; that, by means of immunities and privileges by grants of land and gifts of houses, he had fixed a great number of his Galilean subjects there, and drawn many foreigners to the town; and that of all this nothing was left but a paltry population of four thousand inhabitants and some scattered ruins.

But how much more should I have been gratified could I have visited these ruins; especially those of the buildings destined to commemorate some of the miraculous circumstances of the gospel history! and, could I but have seen the church of St. Peter, built by St. Helena,\* on the site of the house, where the step-mother of that apostle was cured by Jesus Christ, and where he himself, according to tradition, had the happiness to behold the risen Saviour, I should have been satisfied.

Another disappointment, which I felt not less keenly, was to be prevented from executing a plan which I had formed on setting out, namely, to cross the lake at

\* Some writers give the honour of building this church to Tancred, king of Sicily and governor of Judea, under Godfrey. Others, and apparently with much more reason, assert that Tancred did no more than repair the edifice erected by St. Helena.

the same place and in the same direction as the vessel in which Jesus was with his disciples, when by his mighty word he stilled the waves, calmed the tempest, or sent thousands of fishes into the nets of his apostles. The practice which I had made it, ever since my arrival in Palestine, to follow the steps of that divine Master ; to go to the same places where I could say to myself that he had been ; to follow the same paths, to pass the same streams, was one of my chief enjoyments. I felt that the prodigies of his infinite beneficence were thereby the more deeply engraven upon my soul ; that my heart was the more touched, the more thoroughly penetrated, by them ; that my thoughts, my affections, were rendered the more worthy of him : and here I lost an opportunity which, perhaps, might not occur again.

This painful idea, the disease, whose ravages I dreaded, the recollections of the day, and my sufferings, were more than enough to keep me awake : I could not sleep.

At midnight, as we had agreed, we resumed our journey. The first rays of the moon illumined the whole shore. From time to time I turned about, I stopped to look once more at the lake, the town, the environs, which were almost as distinctly visible as in broad day, and to which the moonlight gave a calmer, softer effect. I could scarcely take my eyes from them. Meanwhile the caravan pursued its way ; it looked like a speck that is just vanishing in the distance ; and I was obliged to disregard the difficulties of the road, and to rejoin it at a gallop.

In about two hours, we reached the desert place where Jesus miraculously fed the multitude that followed him.



“And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and his disciples to the multitude.

“And they did all eat and were filled, and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

“And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.” (Matt. xiv. 19—21.)

We alighted to examine this spot more at leisure. Some carried away small stones from it as a memento.

We then turned off to the right, for the mountain of the *Beatitudes*. Such is the name given to a detached and tolerably high hill, from the top of which Jesus delivered that admirable sermon to his apostles, in which he taught them, and in their persons all who would be his disciples, his divine doctrine on HAPPINESS; a doctrine till then unknown in the world, of which philosophy had no suspicion prior to its promulgation, which it has constantly rejected ever since; and the practice of which has, nevertheless, made from age to age the only happy persons that ever lived upon the earth.

The mountain of the Beatitudes is likewise called by some the mountain of Jesus Christ, because our Saviour frequently retired thither to pray; and also mountain of the apostles, because it was there that he selected those whom he thought fit to send forth to the nations to preach his Gospel.

On reaching the foot of this hill, we were stopped by the grass. It was so high that it nearly reached to our horses' heads, and so thick as to prevent all passage.

Our janissaries were obliged to cut it down with their sabres, to open a way for us.

At length we reached the summit, though not without great difficulty. I fell on my knees, and, forgetting for a few moments those about me, I followed the dictates of those feelings which the place inspired, and which thronged into my heart—Here our Lord Jesus sat—there were his apostles—there his disciples—yonder the people who listened to him . . . . Yes, it was there that the Teacher of true wisdom said :—

“Blessed are the poor in spirit.

“Blessed are the meek.

“Blessed are they that mourn.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

“Blessed are the merciful.

“Blessed are the peace-makers.

“Blessed are the pure in heart.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”

And it seemed as though he said to me individually :—

“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad.”  
(Matt. v. 1—12.)

And my joy was indeed great, I assure you, my dear friend; and the feeling of the presence of the divine Master and his disciples, on the same spot, so strong that I could not have been more deeply affected, had they left an undeniable testimony engraven by themselves upon the rock.

Returning to my travelling companions, who, on their part, had experienced impressions which they had not anticipated, I admired with them the beauty of the plain by which the hill is on all sides surrounded. We picked up a few splinters of the rock, to add them to the mementoes which we had elsewhere collected.

In descending, our janissaries, to shorten the way, made us take a path intersected by deep ravines, which obliged us to alight and to lead our horses by the bridle. We had reached the bottom at sunrise. Fiery clouds enveloped the summit that we had just quitted; and this mountain, where the mildest of masters had preached to his disciples the law of love, exhibited in some measure an image of that where, four thousand years before, had been given the law of fear, beneath a flaming sky, amidst thunder and lightnings.

The country which we were traversing was remarkable for its fertility; vegetation was every where active and luxuriant; the fields were covered by abundant crops.

At seven in the morning we entered Cana. The heat was already intense, and the fatigue overpowering. We went and encamped in an orchard, containing a great number of fruit-trees, and, among others, apricot-trees, from which our Arabs shook down the fruit and brought it to us. Weary and parched with thirst, I must confess that we ate it without scruple, recollecting that the apostles, when hungry, had not hesitated to pluck ears in a corn-field on the sabbath-day.

Cana, about two leagues distant from Nazareth, is situated on the slope of a hill. It was anciently one of

the prettiest towns in Galilee: now it is but a mean village, inhabited by poor Arabs. Most of the dwellings are mere huts. You perceive numerous ruins, some of which we visited. But what I, for my part, was most anxious to see was, the place where Jesus, in performing his first miracle, "manifested forth his glory" in such a manner that his disciples believed on him." (John, ii. 11.) We were presently conducted thither by persons whom we had not expected to have for guides.

We were at breakfast, when two schismatic Greek priests, hearing of our arrival, came to beg us to give them a bottle of wine for the service of their church, and invited us to see it. We gave them the wine and followed them. They first took us to their chapel, which is mean and dilapidated. There they showed us an enormous stone vase, and assured us, in the most serious manner, that it was one of those that contained the water which Christ changed into wine. I took care not to betray the least sign of incredulity. They then led us about fifty paces farther, to a building entirely open. To reach it, we were obliged to climb over prodigious heaps of stones, the ruins of walls overthrown either by time or by the hand of man. On the site of this building stood the house where was held the marriage, at which Jesus and his mother were present. St. Helena caused a very handsome church to be built there, over the porch of which were to be seen three water-pots in relievo. In the sequel, the Mahometans seized and converted it into a mosque. At present, one may say, no other traces of it are left but two small pillars, marking the spot where the miracle was wrought, and a kind of altar, at which

it would still be possible to say mass. Every thing in it is in a most deplorable state, or rather there is nothing but ruins piled upon ruins.

The soil in the environs of Cana is fertile; the inhabitants successfully cultivate fruit-trees, the vine, maize, and especially tobacco, the produce of which is abundant.

At some distance from the village is a fountain or a kind of well, wide, but not deep, to which you descend by two flights of steps. The water is very clear and good. Hence was brought that which Jesus changed into wine. A clump of olive trees planted near it affords an agreeable shade to the weary traveller, and contributes to give a picturesque appearance to this fountain. At the moment we were passing, it was surrounded by women, who were washing clothes there; numerous cattle were approaching to quench their thirst. We could not help remarking with pain the most extraordinary contrast between the fertility of the country, those fine cattle, those rich crops, those excellent fruits, and the wretched state of the inhabitants. The faces and the garments of most of them betray the stamp of indigence.

The road by which we returned to Nazareth is very bad, leading over hills whose declivities are rugged and dangerous, and through difficult and stony defiles. We arrived thoroughly tired; the first thing we did was to take some rest, of which we had the greatest need.

Next day my travelling companions returned to the frigate. My state of suffering had interested them; they had shown me such civilities, such attentions, that

I could not sufficiently express my gratitude. I saw them set out with deep regret: my most sincere good wishes accompanied them.

The community was not a little alarmed on learning the deplorable cause which had determined us to leave Tiberias without taking a single hour to look at the place. As it is customary to make a pilgrimage thither every year on St. Peter's day, and that festival was approaching, the Fathers had already begun to think of preparing for the journey. After my report, it was deemed prudent to send a messenger to obtain further information concerning the state of the town. Fifteen persons had died since our departure, and the disease did not appear likely to abate. The danger was judged serious, and the Fathers would not expose themselves to it. How did I then applaud myself for not hazarding a stay which might have compromised the lives of the brave men belonging to his Imperial Majesty's frigate, and for having instigated the adoption of those precautions which had preserved us!

June 27.

The plague has made its appearance in the house of a Greek Catholic: yesterday our Fathers were informed of it, and the monastery was immediately closed. Here I am a prisoner! all my plans, all my projects, are disconcerted. May I hope to see the places that I have yet to visit? I cannot tell: and, for this painful and continual uncertainty, I can comfort myself only by recurring incessantly to the special motto of the Order to which I have the happiness to belong: **THE HOLY WILL OF GOD.** At any rate, it is not probable that

I shall be able to get away while the disease rages ; and, if I could, what security would there be for the continuance of my excursions, and who would consent to be my guide ?

To the melancholy circumstances in which I find myself, you will be indebted for a few words concerning the precautions adopted here by our good Fathers in time of plague.

In every monastery in Palestine, the minister (*curé*) of the place habitually resides. This is always a Franciscan missionary, sufficiently acquainted with the Arabic language to perform, with benefit, the functions of his sacred calling. As soon as the plague breaks out, he goes to lodge out of the convent, that he may be more handy for those who may need his assistance. He visits them, consoles them, cheers them, encourages them by the sublime considerations of religion ; he procures for them all the bodily comforts that are in his power ; he administers the sacraments to them, taking care to avoid all contact that might communicate the disease to himself or render him liable to communicate it to others. To administer the consecrated bread at the Lord's Supper, he uses a pair of silver tongs, extremely slender, and half a yard long. He is, moreover, provided, as much as possible, with the principal preservatives which medical science has yet discovered. It is, nevertheless, no uncommon thing that, in spite of all these precautions, he falls a victim to his zeal, as the minister of Bethlehem has just done.

It is usually in winter that the plague appears. It extends its ravages in the spring, and considerably

abates at the time of the great heats, that is, about the beginning of June. Most of those who are then attacked by it recover. St. John's day is considered as the term when the scourge ceases altogether; but this, as you perceive, is not a strict and absolute truth.

The most important precautions for securing yourself against it, when you are residing in an infected district and you cannot leave it, are, to shut yourself up; not to take in any provisions or other articles but such as the plague has no action upon; and, above all, to destroy the cats, and to prevent them, by all means, from getting into the house. This severity is the more necessary, inasmuch as the disease has no more rapid vehicle than those animals.

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## LETTER XL.

JOURNEY TO NAIM—AGED ARAB—SHEIK OF NAIM—VILLAGE OF SEPHORIS—BETHULIA—DEPARTURE FROM NAZARETH—CAIFFA—MONASTERY OF MOUNT CARMEL—THE MELON GARDEN—WILD BEASTS ON THE CARMEL—ST. JEAN D'ACRE—DJEZZAR-PACHA; HIS CRUELTY—IBRAHIM PACHA.

Mount Carmel, July 9, 1832.

It is but a few days since I wrote to you, my dear friend, from Nazareth, under the apprehension of being detained there for a long time, and here I am at Mount Carmel. Forty-eight hours after the monastery in which I was a prisoner had been closed, an unexpected incident opened its doors for me. Some officers belonging to an English frigate, lying at Caiffa, arrived on the 29th at the convent, and solicited permission to see it. At first, the Fathers hesitated; but, as the plague had carried off but one person since it appeared, and the



first alarm had subsided, they thought it right to admit those gentlemen. I availed myself of this circumstance to leave the house and visit Naim. The reverend Father Gaudenzio Betti, of Pistoia, minister of Nazareth, feeling no apprehension of the progress of the contagion, resolved to accompany me. I was informed that the Bedouins, furious at the reduction of St. Jean d'Acre, infested the environs, and that it would be dangerous to travel without escort: I, therefore, took four Turkish horsemen, armed at all points, and we set out at two in the morning.

The road leading to the plain of Esdrelon, at the extremity of which Naim is situated, is winding and very bad. I was foremost, and in the dark, purblind as I am besides, I had great difficulty to keep the track. All at once I heard a dull sound: I called one of the guides, but received no answer. I called a second time; the same silence prevailed. I continued, nevertheless, to advance. Presently, cries and confused words in the Arabic language reached my ear; and I deemed it prudent to proceed, sword in hand . . . . . I had no need for my courage: it was merely a file of camels, which the drivers were taking towards Nazareth. It was so extremely dark that I did not perceive them till my horse, coming in an opposite direction, had like to have run against the leader of the file. Meanwhile, the good minister and our four horsemen had overtaken me.

At day-break, we entered the extensive plain of Esdrelon. We were approaching mount Hermon, when we perceived on a little hill a small wretched village, consisting of a few huts built of loose stones, but sur-

rounded by numerous ruins, indicating that formerly there must have been a considerable town on that spot. Our people could not tell us its name.

Farther on, we came to a well, at which some hideous Arab women, dressed in rags, with skeleton arms, were drawing up, with toil, buckets of muddy water, and giving to cattle as lean and ill-favoured as themselves.

Three hundred paces from this well, on the right, and at the foot of the mountain, are seen some mean habitations, irregularly built around heaps of stones: this is Naim. Part of these stones are said to have belonged to an old church. Not far off is a ditch, bordered by a wall of ruins, near which are two small mutilated marble pillars. It was there that, according to tradition, Jesus, having stopped those who were carrying the corpse of a widow's son to be interred out of the town, agreeably to the practice of the Jews, raised him from the dead, and restored him alive to his mother. On our arrival there, we knelt down, and the venerable *cure*, dressed in his stole, read with a loud and firm voice, though deeply moved, the following passage of the gospel, to which I listened in religious silence:—

“ And it came to pass the day after that he went into a city called Naim, and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

“ Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

“ And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

“ And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still, and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise.

“ And he that was dead sat up and began to speak : and he delivered him to his mother.

“ And there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet hath risen up among us, and God hath visited his people.

“ And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.”  
(Luke, vii. 11—17.)

We were still on our knees, when we were observed by an aged Arab, whose long white beard flowed over a bosom embrowned by the sun. He accosted the *curé*, who was well acquainted with the language of the country, and, while speaking to him in a very animated tone, he sometimes lifted his eyes to heaven, sometimes cast them down upon the spot on which we were ; and, by the expression of his countenance, as well as by the vehemence of his gestures, he manifested a painful feeling, the cause of which I was unable to guess. The good *curé*, in his turn, raised his eyes to heaven, heaved sighs of grief, and replied in words not less unintelligible to me than those of the old man. When this dialogue was over, I requested Father Gaudenzio to favour me with an explanation of what the Arab had said to him. “ That old man,” he replied, “ is deeply affected to see these ruins. ‘ Christian,’ said he to me, ‘ thou appearest, as well as thy companion, to have a sincere respect for the place where thou art kneeling. I have often seen other pilgrims come hither, like thee, to pray ; how happens it, then, that thou and they leave it in such a

wretched state, since it is held in such veneration by you all, especially by you Franks, who come hither to worship your God ? ” ”

The good Father had endeavoured to explain to him, in the most moderate terms, how, under a government such as that which oppresses Palestine, under rulers so jealous, so unjust, and so cruel, the Christians are obliged to suffer all the monuments of their religion to fall into decay and ruin. This was, alas ! but too true. To obtain permission to repair the most insignificant wall, you must descend to the most humiliating prayers and solicitations ; nay, more, you must even pay to be authorized to solicit ! The proceedings are continued for whole years, and most frequently terminate in nothing definite, unless it be a refusal, which has cost enormous sums.

Meanwhile, we began to feel the necessity for taking some refreshment. We went behind a rock to screen ourselves from the heat of the sun, and there, seated on the ground, began to spread out our provisions, when the sheik of the place arrived. He had arrayed himself in his best. I asked him for some barley and straw for our horses — scarce articles at that time. They were presently brought to us. I requested to be informed what I owed him. “ I am sufficiently paid,” replied he, with all the urbanity of the most polished European, “ by the pleasure of having obliged you.” Nor did he stop there : he had brought with him two other inhabitants ; he sat down with them about ten paces from us, ordered them to make coffee, and insisted on handing it himself to us and the persons of our escort. The latter seated themselves by his side, and smoked along with him.

Such kind and hospitable behaviour touched without surprising me. I had already had occasion to remark it, as I think I have observed to you.

At the moment of parting, I thanked the sheik. I testified my gratitude in such a manner that I had no reason to regret having proved myself less generous than he ; and, having taken a last look at Naim, I set out on my return to Nazareth.

Scarcely had we proceeded a few steps, when we heard the report of a musket behind us. One of our men was missing. Perhaps he had been attacked by some Bedouins in ambush ! I galloped towards the point from which the sound proceeded, and there found our man battling with an enormous snake, at which he had fired his piece. The monstrous reptile, spotted with blue and white, furiously erected its head. We pursued it ; but it got among the bushes and escaped.

Almost immediately after our return, symptoms of the plague, doubtful, it is true, had again appeared among the family of the person whom it had shortly before carried off. I was fearful that the monastery would be again closed ; and, under this apprehension, I at first thought of fixing the 3rd of July for my departure for the Carmel ; but a wish to see Sephoris, the birth-place of St. Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, made me change my resolution. The venerable Father Gaudenzio, whose society had been so delightful to me, and to whom I was indebted for the explanation of the remarkable words of the old Arab, had the kindness to accompany me on this occasion.

The distance from Nazareth to Sephoris is but two

leagues. The road is better than most of those that I have yet travelled. We were well mounted, and arrived in less than two hours.

Sephoris is built on the declivity of a hill which overlooks the plain of Zebulon, one of the most fertile and most abundant in pasturage that I have seen in the Holy Land. According to the account of Josephus, the historian, it was in ancient times "the largest town in Galilee, the strongest from its situation, and the principal defence of the country." Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, resided there with his whole court. At the time of the war of the Jews, it sided against its own nation, and received a Roman garrison. It has the glory of having been the birth-place of St. Joachim and St. Anna, the parents of the Blessed Virgin. At present it is but a village, more considerable, it is true, and less poor, than the villages of Palestine in general are. We discovered no other traces of its original ramparts than rubbish, which is said to be the remains of a castle. Farther off, and outside the modern village, on the site of the house in which Joachim and Anna dwelt, St. Helena caused a church to be built: its ruins, in tolerable preservation, still attest the magnificence of this edifice. The Franciscan Fathers go thither once a year to say mass. To pay more particular honour to the parents of the holy mother of our Saviour, I made a point of entering this church with a torch in my hand, as I had done when visiting the principal sanctuaries. We tarried there a short time to pray, not without experiencing those deep, tender, and soothing emotions, which the places con-

secrated by the presence of Jesus and his saints never fail to excite.

I should have liked, before I returned, to take a nearer view of Bethulia, so celebrated for the siege which it sustained from the army of Holofernes, general of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria ; and still more for the miracle of his deliverance through the intrepidity of the courageous Judith. I was curious to examine the ruins still discoverable, it is said, of the canals which conveyed the water of the neighbouring springs to the inhabitants, and which were cut by Holofernes ; that, by depriving them of it, he might force them to surrender the sooner : but it was too late to go on thither, and to return the same day to Nazareth. To my regret, I could do no more than look at Bethulia from the heights of Sephoris, whence it is perceived on the side of a lofty hill, extending to the north-west. According to the account of my worthy companion, it is now a considerable and tolerably populous village.

The day after my excursion to Sephoris, I made preparations for my final departure. I resolved to take another look at the places in Nazareth which I had visited, and to bid them a last farewell ; but it was with a sad heart, oppressed with grief at the idea of quitting them. I have already told you that the thought of being in the town where Jesus, Mary, and Joseph had long dwelt, made me quite happy : the idea of leaving it for ever was so much the more painful and bitter : it seemed as though I was parting from the holy family itself.

At one the next morning I heard mass at the altar of

the Annunciation, and received the holy communion. At two o'clock I entered the sacred grotto, where I passed some time in prayer.

At half-past three I was on the road to Carmel. A janissary on horseback, two men on foot, well armed, and a guide, composed my escort. A camel carried my baggage.

The distance from Nazareth to Carmel is about eight leagues. The road bad, like all those of Palestine, is bordered, as it were, with rocks, between which, at intervals, there are plains whose soil is fertile but very ill cultivated. It runs through a wood that is reputed dangerous: when we approached it, my people appeared uneasy. We passed through it without molestation.

On my arrival at Caiffa, the Egyptian troops were employed in repairing the fortifications. I rode through the midst of a great number of soldiers, tents, and pieces of artillery.

The town is filthy and ill-built. Some assert that it derives its name from its rocks, which, according to the interpreters, are called in Syriac, *Cepha*; others say that it is named after the chief priest, Caiaphas, who, they add, was the lord of this place. At the time of the Crusades, it fell into the hands of the French, who fortified it, and long maintained themselves there against the incursions of the Saracens. The latter, having taken it in the sequel, laid it in ruins, and reduced it to the wretched plight in which it appears at this day.

I had still a league to travel before I should reach the end of my journey. My camel-driver, who, till then,



had been willing and obliging, told me plumply that he could not take my baggage any farther. Offer what I would, I could not conquer his obstinacy; I was obliged to continue my route, and to leave every thing valuable that I possessed behind me at Caiffa.

At length I arrived at the monastery of Mount Carmel. I was welcomed with Christian charity and kindness by the superior and his monks, only three in number. They insisted on my occupying the room of the divan, which, after repeated refusals, I was obliged to accept, at the urgent desire of the good Fathers.

About twelve years ago, during the war between the Greeks and the Porte, Abdallah Pacha completely demolished this monastery and church, upon the vain and ridiculous pretext that the Greeks might get possession and make a fortress of it. The Grand Signor, sensible of the extreme infamy of such conduct, issued a firman, enjoining the pacha to rebuild the monastery at his own expence; but Abdallah took no notice of this order. The Carmelite Fathers, who had anticipated this disobedience, resolved to make a collection in Europe; and, with the resources thus obtained, they fell to work. The buildings, begun on a handsome plan, are already half completed. The church is very beautiful. As, unfortunately, the materials, and even water, can only be conveyed thither on the backs of asses or camels, the expences are enormous; the funds are nearly exhausted; and, with the indifference of the catholics of the west, it is easy to foresee that the edifice will not very soon be finished. It is, however, sufficiently advanced in the part where I am, to afford a comfortable lodging.

The word Carmel is variously explained by the interpreters : according to some, it signifies *circumcised lamb* ; according to others, *field that is cut or harvested* ; others again translate it, *vine of God or of the Lord*.

Under this name is in general comprized a chain of hills extending for the space of about seven leagues from north-east to south-west, the top of which is a spacious rocky plain, five leagues broad, in ancient times covered with vines, and now with wood, which serves for a retreat to panthers and other ferocious animals. I am assured that the circumference of this chain, at its base, is about seventy miles, or twenty-three leagues.

The name of Carmel is given more especially to the hill nearest to Caiffa, on the summit of which stand the monastery where I am, and the church which is dedicated to St. Elijah. On this hill the prophet dwelt for a long time. It was here that he assembled the people of Israel, and caused the prophets of Baal to be put to death. In the church is still to be seen the cave where he secreted himself to avoid the persecutions of Ahab and Jezebel. It is about fifteen feet long and twelve broad. It served the saint for dwelling and oratory. Here he obtained by his prayers abundant rains, which, after three years' drought, put an end to the distress that prevailed in the country. Over the cave stands a chapel, which is considered the most ancient of all those that have been erected in honour of the blessed Virgin. It is called Our Lady of Mount Carmel. According to tradition, it dates from the year 83 of Christ.

A few paces higher is the grotto of Elisha, the disciple of Elijah : it is hewn out of the rock, and there is a cis-

tern close to it. To this place it was, according to tradition, that the Shunamite came to implore the prophet to raise her son from the dead.

At the foot of the hill is a cavern, twenty feet long, eighteen wide, and twelve high. A cistern and some trees, by which it is shaded, render it a very agreeable spot ; but the access to it is difficult and dangerous. It is called the Grotto of the Sons of the Prophets. Here, it is said, the prophet Elijah received the chiefs of the people. It is now inhabited by a santon.

About a league farther is a piece of ground, called the Melon Garden, because you there meet with stones so closely resembling that fruit, in shape and appearance, that you would take them for petrified melons. It is said that the prophet Elijah, as he was passing this ground, being pressed by thirst, requested the gardener to give him a melon to refresh him. The man refused, though his garden was covered with that fruit ; and, adding raillery to refusal, " What you see," said he, " what you take for melons, are nothing but stones." Whereupon the man of God cursed the garden ; and thenceforth it has produced nothing but stone melons. Travellers, either out of curiosity or devotion, have carried several away with them to their own country. The fact is certain ; as for the cause, think what you please about it.

Among the illustrious personages who have visited Carmel, is mentioned, among others, St. Louis, who made a pilgrimage to it about the middle of the thirteenth century ; and Jeanne de Dreux, consort of Philip the Long, whose piety carried her thither ninety years afterwards.

In this account of Carmel, my dear friend, I have made a point of confining myself to the religious recollections which it awakens. If you wish to know what profane history says of it, you will find in Tacitus, Pliny, and Strabo, some particulars which may interest you, but which neither time nor my position permit me to collect.

I mentioned just now the wild beasts by which the Carmel is haunted. Listen to an adventure that lately befel a servant of the convent. The poor fellow cannot yet relate it without shuddering; and my story will probably make you shudder too.

The officers of the Austrian frigate, whom I so unexpectedly fell in with at Nazareth, came also to see the Carmel. On leaving, they begged this servant to show them a path that would lead them to their boat. Having done so, he was quietly returning to the convent, when all at once he saw a prodigious panther darting towards him. At sight of the formidable animal, his limbs quivered, and he found himself utterly powerless to stir a step. In the twinkling of an eye, the panther came up to him, and, playing with him as a cat does with a mouse which she has caught, she placed herself successively in different postures, varied her paces, and strove to touch him with her foot as if to teaze him: then, suddenly retiring a few paces, she made a spring at him. Trembling and aghast, the unhappy man recommended himself to God. He knew, from the horrid fate which other unfortunate persons had undergone in similar circumstances, how this terrible sport must end: he believed that his last moment was come. But, at that very moment,

both man and beast heard a noise: it was a mounted Arab, armed with a gun, who was passing that way. Alarmed in her turn, the panther fled at the instant when, helpless and incapable of the least exertion, he, whom she detained prisoner, was about to become her victim. He returned to the monastery, thanking Heaven, in the warmest effusions of gratitude, for having miraculously delivered him from such imminent danger.

From the room which I occupy, I enjoy an extensive and magnificent prospect. On the left, my eye wanders over the sea; on the right, it is struck by the aspect of hills, lifting their enormous rocks into the air; some naked, others covered with wood. At the foot of Carmel, I see Caiffa and its harbour; three leagues distant, where the coast is scooped out in the form of a basin, St. Jean d'Acre, or, more properly speaking, the ruins of that town, demolished by a shower of balls and bombs which lasted for seven months. Yesterday evening, I paused to contemplate that theatre of a violent and furious war, on which the moon threw her pale light; and, with my eyes fixed on the ruins, I said to myself: "Yonder, then, it lies demolished — that strong-hold of despotism, where, for so many years, tyrants have sported with the lives of men; that fortress, where, while the garrison was so valiantly defending the ramparts, the last Abdallah Pacha, without energy, without courage, kept himself ignominiously concealed in his harem, waiting till, after he had lost all, an order from Ibrahim should bid him go with a white handkerchief round his neck to throw himself at the feet of the conqueror and

receive permission to live!" And I admired the dispensations of Providence in regard to these two men—of that Providence, "which," to use the language of Bossuet, "without authorizing rebellions, permits them, and punishes crimes by other crimes, which, ever terrible, and ever just, it chastises also in its own good time."\*

You may well imagine, my dear friend, that, within sight of St. Jean d'Acre, it is not possible to avoid recollecting that the flames which raged in these later times in Europe extended to the East—to the very walls, whose sad ruins I can discern from my window. Accordingly, how many times have my thoughts been directed to the conqueror who was commissioned by Heaven to chastise the Christian world; but who, the moment he set foot in Asia, was suddenly stopped here by the Power superior to all powers, by that which says to all those whom it employs as its instruments: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther!" and which is always obeyed. How often, in particular, has my soul thrilled with horror at the recollection of that Djazzar Pacha, whose cruelties equalled those of the most execrable tyrants, and who has retained the odious surname of *Butcher*, which he boasted of having given to himself!

In this country the name of Djazzar is not uttered without deep abhorrence, without a shudder. You would say that those who speak of him still hear the shrieks of the victims whom he sacrificed to his thirst of blood; and that the groans of his servants, of his women, in the agonies of death, inflicted by the hand of that executioner, are still ringing in their ears: you would say that they

\* *Politique sacrée*, 4to. p. 372.

have still before their eyes the heaps of human limbs which he took delight in mangling, which he piled up, yet palpitating, to feast himself afterwards on the disgusting sight !

And yet — would you believe it, my friend ? — some traits which would do honour to the prince most devoted to the interests of justice escaped that monster in the course of his life. Here is one, which, from its singularity, deserves relating.

A young Christian, carrying on business at St. Jean d'Acre, had won the good graces of Djeddar by the dealings which he had had with him, when selling to him various European commodities. He lived in a handsome house with his father, an aged and infirm man. The latter occupied the best and most convenient apartment on the second floor. The young man, who was about to marry, requested his father to give up his room to him for a few weeks only, protesting that he would then restore it with many thanks. The old man complied, and, going down to the first floor, though it was disagreeable and unwholesome, he settled himself in it.

At the expiration of the time specified, he claimed his room ; the young couple begged him to wait : he consented, and allowed a further term. At the end of it, he again urged his claim. But this time, the ungrateful son, unmindful of what he owed to his parent, insolently declared that he intended to stay where he was ; and desired that he might not be troubled any more on the subject. The unfortunate father bore the injury in silence. But, as his compliance with the wishes of his

son, and the restrictions which he had attached to it were known, the unworthy conduct of the young man soon became public.

Djezzar, by means of his numerous spies, knew all that passed; being informed of this circumstance, he sent for the son. The young man, relying on a goodwill of which he had previously received habitual testimonies, hastened to the pacha, without hesitation and without fear. He found him in his divan, surrounded by his ministers and his executioners, and very soon perceived that he had incurred his displeasure.

“Of what religion art thou?” cried Djezzar, darting at him a look which made him turn pale with fear, and deprived him of the power to reply.

“I ask,” he resumed, raising his voice, “of what religion thou art.”

“I . . . I am a Christian, as your excellency knows.”

“A Christian! Thou liest! Let us see! Make the sign of the Christians.”

The young man, trembling, made the sign of the cross.

“That is not it,” said the pacha, clapping his hand upon his dagger: “pronounce aloud,” continued he, “pronounce aloud the words which accompany that sign.”

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” said the terrified Christian.

“Repeat them,” said the pacha, “and speak louder; I am old and growing deaf.”

The young man lifted his right hand to his forehead, and repeated in as loud a voice as he could: “In the



name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

"Aha!" cried Djeddar, in a voice that made the divan shake, and thrilled the young man with horror. "Aha! wretch! the Father is on the forehead, the Son on the breast! . . . . Knowest thou what that means? The Father is above, and the Son below. Go, scoundrel! go home, and if in a quarter of an hour it is not so there, thy head shall roll in the dust."

I need not say what haste the culprit made to throw himself at the feet of his father, to beg his pardon, and to give up the room which he had dared to withhold from him so unjustly.

Perhaps, my friend, you will be astonished that, when so near Acre, I have not determined to go thither. Before my departure from Carmel, I was advised to go and see the ruins of the place, and to pay a visit to Ibrahim. I have thought it right not to follow that advice. What should I have seen in the town? that which I have seen sufficiently at a distance: and in the conqueror of Abdallah? a brave man, no doubt, but a rebellious subject. Now, I neither like, nor I can endure, rebels or rebellions.

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## LETTER XLI.

DEPARTURE FROM MOUNT CARMEL — SOUR OR TYRE — SAIDA OR SIDON—BEYROUT—M. LAURELLA, AUSTRIAN VICE-CONSUL—MOUNT LEBANON.

Beyrout, July 13, 1832.

On Friday evening, my dear Charles, I embarked in a

Turkish vessel for the town from which I am writing to you. I intended to visit Tyre and Sidon by the way, and I agreed in consequence with the captain that I should land wherever I pleased.

No sooner had we sailed than I found myself sick, as I always am at sea, but worse this time than I ever was before on the water. For a great part of the night, the wind was contrary ; nevertheless, by eleven in the forenoon, we were off Tyre, now better known by the name of Sour. We stopped there some hours.

Respecting the antiquity of this town, historians differ. Some date back its origin as far as Tyras, the grandson of Japhet, from whom, they say, it derives its name. Others, grounding their opinion on a passage in Isaiah, who calls it the "daughter of Sidon," which, in the language of Scripture, signifies that Tyre was a colony of the latter, suppose it to have been founded several centuries later. Appealing to the testimony of Josephus, they assert that it is only 240 years anterior to the temple of Solomon, that is to say, that it dates from the year of the world 2760. Some maintain that there were two Tyres : the one much more ancient, and built on the continent near the coast ; the other, more modern, standing on an island opposite to the former, from which it is separated only by an arm of the sea. You will assuredly not expect that a simple pilgrim, who humbly visits these parts from a very different motive than that of a profane science and erudition, should involve himself in questions which have occupied and perplexed the ablest scholars. I leave the solution of them to the learned.

Be the origin of Tyre what it may, all histories, all

monuments, agree in representing it as one of the most celebrated, powerful, and flourishing cities that existed in the ancient world. Mistress of the sea; the centre of the commerce of the world; drawing from all countries to her markets whatever could enrich her by the sale or the exchange of the commodities which contribute most to the luxury, the vanity, the delight, or the convenience of life; having become necessary or formidable to all nations; treating them as an insolent ruler treats those whom he has subjected to his power; carrying on a shameful traffic in the fortunes and lives, not only of her enemies, but even of her allies; insulting Jerusalem in her misfortunes; pushing her impiety so far as to strip her and her temple of their richest treasures, to offer them to the infamous deities whom she worshipped—she deserved that Heaven should at length hurl upon her the threats of its wrath.

Before the ruins of haughty Tyre, I opened Ezekiel, and there I read:—

“Because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha! she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me; I shall be replenished now she is laid waste:

“Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

“And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

“It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the

midst of the sea : for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God, and it shall become a spoil to the nations.

“ And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword, and they shall know that I am the Lord.

“ For thus saith the Lord God, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.

“ He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field, and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.

“ And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.

“ By reason of the abundance of his horses, their dust shall cover thee; thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.

“ With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets; he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.

“ And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandize, and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses, and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust, in the midst of the water.

“ And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease, and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.

“ And I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou

shalt be a place to spread nets upon : thou shalt be built no more . . . . .

“ Thus saith the Lord God to Tyrus, Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee ?

“ Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments : they shall clothe themselves with trembling, they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee.

“ And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it ?” (Ezekiel, xxvi.)

And, after reading these terrible words of Him who never threatens in vain, I meditated for a few moments, my soul filled with awe, in the presence of the ruins which were before my eyes ; on that long siege, at the conclusion of which, Nebuchadnezzar, the instrument of the divine vengeance, reduced to ashes the infatuated city which had dared to set itself up against the Most High.

And my thoughts then turned with pain to succeeding ages, when, having again become great, wealthy, powerful, corrupted by pride, and continuing to place her reliance on the false props of her prosperity, she forgot as well the chastisement which she had suffered as the crimes which had drawn it upon her.

And I opened Isaiah, and there I read :—

“ The burden of Tyre. Howl ye ships of Tarshish,

for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in : from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.

“ Be still ye inhabitants of the isle ; thou whom the merchants of Zidon that pass over the sea have replenished.

“ And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue, and she is a mart of nations.

“ Be thou ashamed, O Zidon, for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men nor bring up virgins.

“ As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.

“ Pass ye over to Tarshish, howl ye inhabitants of the isle.

“ Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days ? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.

“ Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth ?

“ The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth . . . . .

“ He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms : the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant city to destroy the strongholds thereof ;

“ And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon : arise, pass over to Chittim, there also thou shalt have no rest.

**“Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for your strength is laid waste.” (Isaiah, xxiii.)**

And I adored the awful decrees of Providence against guilty towns and empires, while calling to mind by what a series of events almost incredible, and yet attested by all histories, this second denunciation was fulfilled. Four hundred years after the terrible punishment inflicted by Nebuchadnezzar on the pride of Tyre, Alexander came hither, in his turn, to accomplish the predictions of Isaiah against that city, which had again begun to lift herself up above the nations and above God himself; and notwithstanding the silver, which, to use the words of Scripture, she had “heaped up, like dust”; notwithstanding “the gold which she had gathered together like the mud of the public places”; notwithstanding the height and the strength of her ramparts, behind which she deemed herself inexpugnable; notwithstanding the “girdle” of waters which encompassed her; notwithstanding the violence of the winds, the storms, and the waves, which were as favourable to her as they were adverse to her enemies; notwithstanding the innumerable multitude of the ships which gave her the dominion of the seas; notwithstanding her skill in working and navigating them; notwithstanding the valour of her warriors; notwithstanding all the efforts of courage and all the stratagems of cunning; notwithstanding all the animosity and fury that despair can inspire—she sunk under the stroke of a foe who had on his side neither silver, nor gold, nor ramparts, nor waters, nor winds, nor tempests, nor seamen, nor skill in naval warfare; and who, himself and his heroes, had nought wherewith to fight, save that force

of will, that intelligence, and that long and persevering patience, with which God always endows those whom he chooses to execute his vengeance.

At the present day, the only remains left upon the ashes of Tyre are a few heaps of stones, covered with grass and gravel, and some mean scattered houses, the inhabitants of which, Christians and Turks, all poor, subsist chiefly by fishing. The only monument to be seen is a granite pillar, among the ruins scarcely to be recognized of an ancient church, in which it is believed that Origen was buried. Though I have read the contrary in geographers of repute, there exists not the least vestige of the famous dyke by which Alexander united the island with the continent.

A stone is pointed out near Tyre as that on which our Saviour is said to have sat to preach to the Tyrians; and it is added, that this is the place where a pious woman exclaimed in a transport of admiration: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee!"

I arrived in the evening at Saida, the ancient Sidon; and, as the next day was Sunday, I stayed there till sunset. I lodged with the Franciscan Father who performs the functions of *cure*, and who occupies a spacious building belonging to the Fathers of the Holy Land.

Sidon, one of the most ancient cities in the world, was the capital of Phœnicia. It derived its name from Sidon, the eldest son of Canaan, who was its founder. So early as the time of Moses, it was celebrated and powerful, through its commerce and industry. Its inhabitants are supposed to have been the first navigators: they extended their dominion over the neighbouring countries,



and established various colonies, the most famous of which were Tyre and Carthage. To them are attributed the discovery of the process for making glass, and the invention of several useful arts, carpentry, cabinet-making, stone-cutting, carving in wood, &c. Some of their workmen were invited to Jerusalem by Solomon, and wrought at the construction of the Temple. In the time of Jesus Christ, this city had lost almost all its ancient splendour and great part of its population, in consequence of the numerous revolutions which it had undergone. It had the happiness to embrace the faith and to be visited by the apostle Paul. It is believed also to have been the retreat of St. Peter, on his deliverance from prison; but this opinion is less certain, and is founded on tradition alone.

The new town is built on part of the ruins of the ancient city. When viewed from the sea, it makes a very handsome appearance, with which, however, the interior is far from corresponding. Its edifices present nothing remarkable: most of them are ill-built and irregular. The Turks have numerous mosques there, and the Christians a church. Both in the town and in the environs you meet with ruins and broken columns; some lying, others half-buried, which convey some idea of its former grandeur and magnificence. The present population amounts to about seven thousand souls, four hundred of whom are catholics.

The consuls of France resided for a very long time at Saida, in an extensive edifice belonging to their nation: they are now established at Beyrout, with those of the other governments. In their place there is a sort of

agent, whom I cannot designate by any diplomatic denomination. It was by mere accident that I learned this circumstance. In passing the house of this personage, I was apprized of it by a singular flag: it was a ragged sheet of wretched paper, waving in the wind, on which I read the words: *Vive la Revolution de 1830!* I should hardly think that this agent will apply to the minister for foreign affairs for an allowance on account of the state which he keeps up.

At this moment lodgings are preparing in the town for the officers of the Egyptian government entrusted with the administration of Syria. They will reside there at least for some time.

It was eight in the evening when I quitted Saida, the last town belonging to the tribe of Asher, and consequently in the Holy Land. I left it, regretting that I could not visit the tomb of Zebulon, which, I was assured, is enclosed in a neighbouring mosque; and the cavern of the Sidonians, which the crusaders in the twelfth century converted into one of their best fortresses. At six in the morning I arrived at Beyrout. There I was received with most particular kindness by the Austrian consul, M. Laurella, who had done me the favour to bespeak me a cell in the convent of the Capuchin Fathers.

Beyrout has suffered severely from the plague; but the disease had ceased: during the last fortnight, two Egyptians only had died, and no fresh cases were heard of. It is a commercial town, with a population of six thousand souls, and containing nothing remarkable but the ruins of the palace of Facardin, or Fechredin, a

celebrated emir, said to be descended from Godfrey of Bouillon, who, in the fifteenth century, reigned for some years over part of Palestine, which he had conquered.

Mount Lebanon, at the foot of which Beyrout is seated, separates the Holy Land from Syria, whose loftiest mountains it overtops. Its name, which signifies *white*, is derived from the snow with which in many places its summits are perpetually covered. It presents lengthwise the semicircular form of a horse-shoe. The western part is specially denominated Lebanon; it extends from Tripoli to the environs of Damascus. The points most distant from the sea are not above two or three leagues from it: in other places the mountain approaches so close to the water as not even to leave a passage. The eastern part, which extends towards Arabia, and runs off below Damascus, is called by the Greeks Anti-Lebanon. Between the two there is a long valley, watered by numerous brooks, and extremely fertile: this is the Coelo-Syria, or hollow Syria, of the ancients.

The total circuit of the two portions, to which the Europeans give the general name of Lebanon, is about one hundred leagues. To the south is Palestine; to the north, Armenia; to the east, Mesopotamia and part of Arabia Deserta; to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

The mountains of the Lebanon, rising one above another, present four totally distinct zones. The soil of the first abounds in corn, and is covered in many places with fruit-trees. The second is but a belt of bare and barren rocks. The third, notwithstanding its elevation, exhibits the aspect of ever-verdant trees; the mildness of its climate, its gardens, its orchards, full of the finest

fruits of Syria, and the streams by which it is watered, make it, according to the expression of several writers, a sort of earthly paradise. The fourth is lost in the clouds: the snow with which it is covered, and the severity of the cold, render it uninhabitable and at certain seasons of the year almost inaccessible. On one of these summits are the cedars mentioned in Scripture.

The Lebanon is much more populous than the other mountains of which I have had occasion to treat. It contains numerous villages, inhabited by Mahometans and by Maronite christians, and several monasteries. Among these holy retreats there is a very handsome building, six leagues from this place, on one of the loftiest points of the mountain, belonging to the Fathers of the Holy Land. It is called Larissa. The purity of the air which one breathes, and the peace and quiet that one enjoys there—but, above all, a desire to make the acquaintance of an Austrian monk, called Father Vital, a veteran of eighty, who is regarded in the country as a saint—have made me determine to go and spend a few days at that place. I shall then continue my journey, and I shall not omit to stop at least for a few moments at Antoura, to call upon the good sisters of the Visitation, for whom as I told you I brought alms, which I transmitted to them during my illness in Cyprus.

I have found here packets from Europe waiting for me. This is the first time for a year past that I had received tidings from my friends, and then what a chasm in this correspondence! The deficient letters are precisely those from the persons dearest to my heart. One must be in my situation to feel how extremely painful

are such privations at so great a distance. Ah! what have I not had to suffer besides from the mere consideration of the grievous losses that may be inflicted by that destructive scourge which is at this moment ravaging the world! It is a trouble, for which I find no relief but at the foot of the altar.

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## LETTER XLII.

SHIPWRECKS—DOG'S RIVER—ROAD CONSTRUCTED BY THE EMPEROR ANTONINUS—ANTOURA—CONVENT OF LAZARISTS—CONVENT OF THE VISITATION—BLACK NUN—MONASTERY OF LARISSA—FATHER VITAL FILKUKA—ARMENIAN CONVENT.

Larissa, July 26th, 1832.

On the 14th, at a very early hour, I quitted Beyrout, where I left all my baggage. M. Laurella, the consul, did me the favour to accompany me to Antoura, four leagues distant. The morning was fine; but it betokened one of those sweltering days so common in Syria, especially at this season. We proceeded along the coast for nearly two leagues. It was rough. The foaming waves rolled in and broke very near us, covering the legs of our horses. I felt a certain pleasure in being amidst this white spray, which seemed to dash on as though to engulph us, and then retreated quaking; and my thoughts were raised with admiration towards Him who hath assigned to it limits which it cannot pass.

After a ride of a league, I perceived on the beach several hulls of shipwrecked vessels: this was to me a fearful sight. The consul told me that among these

wrecks there were Tuscan, Neapolitan, and French vessels, lost in the storms of February last, the most violent that have occurred in the memory of man. He related to me, among other facts, that a Tuscan captain was on shore when his ship struck : his son was on board, and the vessel contained his all. In so cruel a situation the unfortunate father did not hesitate to defy the danger : throwing himself into a boat, he struggled resolutely against the fury of the waves, which threatened every moment to swallow him up ; and, by his exertions, saved not only his son, but the whole crew and part of the cargo.

I know not, my dear Charles, any thing more capable of disposing the soul to meditation, and inspiring serious and salutary reflections, than the sight of a wreck. Alas ! is man, be he who he will, any other than a voyager, for a longer or a shorter period, on a sea constantly lashed by the tempest ? The fatal hour of shipwreck arrives for him a little sooner or a little later. Happy he, should he then be found worthy to be picked up by his heavenly Father and carried into port !

We soon quitted the shore and found ourselves among rocks. Having proceeded for some time along wretched tracks, great was my surprise to come to a very spacious road, not far from which a river rolled its azure waters between the hills. This river was the Lycus, the Wolf of the ancients : it is now called Dog's River ; in Arabic, Nahar-el-Khell.

An inscription informed us that the road was constructed by the emperor Antoninus. It records that this emperor widened the way by cutting down the hills that

border the River Lycus. Part of the inscription is effaced : the following words are still legible : —

CÆSAR M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS

PIUS, FELIX, AUGUSTUS

. . . . .

. . . . .

. . . . . PONTIFEX MAXIMUS

. . . . . MONTIBUS IMMINENTIBUS

LYCO FLUMINI CÆSIS VIAM DILATAVIT.

This road, now much neglected, is about a quarter of a league in length. On leaving it, you find yourself close to the river, which is very rapid, but so shallow that we preferred fording it, though there is in this place a handsome bridge of five arches.

The heat was oppressive. Our horses, which had travelled for several hours in the sand, were fatigued. We alighted, sat down on the bank, in a thicket of rose-laurels, and rested ourselves. We quenched our thirst, but slowly and cautiously : the water of the Lycus is so cold that you cannot at one draught satisfy a burning thirst without danger.

We then began to ascend the arid hills by roads which reminded me of those of Judea, especially that from Rama to Jerusalem. One pass, in particular, was so frightful as to make us shudder. It is that where some years since the legate of the Holy See to the catholics of the Lebanon was thrown, by a false step of his horse, to the bottom of the abyss and killed. Our horses felt their way : the same cause, the least fragment of rock, by giving way, might hurl us to the bottom. I shut my eyes, at times, and found it difficult to repress a feeling of fear. . . . .

But, having cleared this terrible pass, we came to better roads, and were abundantly compensated for the fatigues we had undergone and the perils we had incurred. We were still travelling, it is true, among the mountains; but, in that part where we were, they were covered from their base to their summit with superb mulberry-trees, whose fresh and lively verdure astonished and delighted the eye, especially in a country where no rain falls for eight months in the year.

The charm produced by these vast forests of useful trees keeps increasing as you approach Antoura; and the various monasteries, which you perceive around you on the heights, crown the prospect, if I may be allowed the expression, in the most graceful manner. With what transport did I not again behold the august sign of the redemption, rising from the top of catholic steeples towards the sky; and how did I feel my heart thrill at the first moment, when, balanced above the smiling scenery, the bell sent to my ear its religious sounds, which I had not heard for so long a time! Since I had set foot in Asia, having, I may say, seen nothing but mosques and minarets, surmounted with the crescent, it seemed to me to be an illusion.

It was one o'clock when we arrived at Antoura, and we went immediately to the convent of the Lazarists, who have succeeded the Jesuits in that village. We were received with particular charity and kindness by two French Fathers, whose virtues remind you of those of St. Vincent de Paul, their founder. Their house is small and simple, but arranged and fitted up with great taste; the church is extremely neat, and the garden



delightful. I observed in it orange-trees, such as I have never met with elsewhere : several of them are at least thirty feet high, and thick in proportion. The view is lovely, extending over a rich and fertile valley, bounded by the sea.

Before me, and at no great distance, was the handsome winter habitation, built by the present legate Monseigneur Lozanna, bishop of Abydos, a prelate of great merit, to whom I had purposed to pay my respects ; but who was then with the patriarch at the monastery of Canobin, which he had chosen for his summer residence.

After dinner, the consul and a Lazarist Father accompanied me to the convent of the Visitation. The good nuns were rejoiced to see me ; they again thanked me for having taken charge of the alms sent them by their sisters at Friburg, and pressed me to come with the consul on the following day to dine with them. Their invitation was too earnest and too sincere for me to refuse it.

These nuns are all Arabs : they dress and live like the Visitandines in Europe, except that they go barefoot and sit upon the floor. Their house is poor : they have no other resources for the supply of their wants but the produce of their silk-worms, which is sometimes very considerable, and the donations of inhabitants of the Lebanon, or visitors from Europe.

Next day we were punctual to the appointment. We dined in the parlour with a Maronite bishop. The greatest part of the community, squatted on their heels, looked at us : never had the good sisters seen such a dress as mine. The consul, who is perfect master

of Arabic, served me as interpreter. I spoke to them of Europe, of their order, of their holy founder. They listened to what I said with curiosity, with remarkable avidity, but when it came to their turn to say a few words, they talked of nothing but their wants, and to that subject they were continually reverting.

Two of them particularly attracted my notice : one is a hundred and six years old, and has spent ninety of them in the monastery ; the other is a black, formerly a slave ; she belongs to the choir, and goes by the name of Egyptian Mary. She is thus called, I am told, from her resemblance, as well in her piety as in the colour of her skin, to the female saint whom St. Anthony met with in the desert, burnt, and, as it were, blackened by the sun. I had expressed a strong desire to see her. All the solicitations of the Superior to induce her to come forward were at first unavailing : she even resisted a formal order for a moment, so that the reverend Mother was under the necessity of admitting, with some embarrassment, that the pious sister was rather obstinate. "But," added she, "this defect proceeds from her origin, and, of course, it has a claim to excuse." "And so much the stronger claim," I replied, "since the negroes figure the devil to themselves as white. Perhaps," I added, "Sister Mary may have caught a glimpse of my dress, and it may have frightened her." However, she soon repented of her disobedience : she threw herself at the feet of the Superior, begged her pardon, and came immediately to pay me a visit.

On the following day I parted from M. Laurella, who

returned to Beyrout, and I set out with one of the Lazarist Fathers for Larissa.

From Antoura to that monastery there is no road, nothing but here and there narrow passes, unequally cut in the rock, on the brink of frightful precipices. I was mounted on an ass of uncommon strength, and which, though accustomed to perilous tracks, had the greatest difficulty to get forward. My fellow traveller had determined to walk. I was obliged to do the same, part of the way. The country continued to exhibit nearly the same aspect; monasteries, some vineyards, magnificent forests of olives, and more especially of mulberry-trees, planted and kept in admirable order. Silk constitutes the principal wealth of the inhabitants of the Lebanon; if that resource should happen to fail, they would be reduced to poverty, they would be ruined.

At length, in about three hours, we arrived at the monastery of Larissa, the situation of which is extremely elevated. We found at the door an old man waiting for us. Hair white as snow, and a beard not less white, flowing over his bosom, gave him a most venerable look. His complexion was fair and ruddy, his smile that of an angel. Fain could I have taken him for one of those elders who surround the throne of the Lamb, and who had been permitted for a moment to revisit the earth. He said to me in German:—"Welcome, my good father and dear fellow countryman!" This was Father Vital Filkuka, born in 1757, at Jamnitz in Moravia. In his youth he was a Franciscan monk. At the time when the convents were suppressed by the Emperor Joseph, he became priest of Kirchwieder, in the district of Iglau,

where he remained upwards of thirty years. At the age of sixty, he solicited, and with difficulty obtained permission to end his days in Palestine, in some house of the order to which he belonged by his vows. He has performed the office of warden at Nazareth, where his name is revered. For the last fifteen years, his virtue, and his warm, tender, indulgent piety, have been the edification of this part of the country. The first thing he did was to put me in possession of two rooms which he had prepared for my reception. No sooner was I installed in them, than he required of me, in the kindest manner, a formal promise to stay some time with him. I assented the more cheerfully, as I felt happy to have before my eyes so perfect a pattern, and to be able, in profound solitude, placed, as it were, between heaven and earth, to meditate with more attention and more freedom on the divine favours which had thus far accompanied my pilgrimage.

Larissa is a charming monastery, built in the style of the Italian convents. Every thing about it is extremely clean ; the situation is delightful, and the prospect admirable. You have before you the sea, which washes the foot of the mountain, forming a bay covered with vessels, entering or sailing out ; on the right, hills garlanded with vines, and a deep valley, at the bottom of which stand here and there detached houses, surrounded with olive-trees ; beyond it, on the shore, the little village of Jonah, so called because the prophet was cast up there by the fish which had swallowed him : on the left, at the distance of six leagues, Beyrout, its road, the shipping lying in it, a multitude of country-houses, and

the surrounding forest. But what particularly calls and fixes your attention is not so much that sea, that bay, that town, that road, those vessels, as the sky of Larissa, pure, serene, almost always cloudless ; as those exquisite nights, when the eye, concentrated, if I may use the expression, and far from all distraction, can contemplate with holy ecstasy, by the mild light of the moon, those millions of stars, silently pursuing their courses in the firmament ; those worlds without number, which, though at infinite distances, mark their presence by a luminous point, of whose brilliancy our finest diamonds exhibit but a faint image. When you are on the terrace at Larissa, in one of those magnificent evenings which are unknown in the West, but which are here so common, with what eagerness, with what transport, the eye feasts upon the divine spectacle of those radiant spheres, glistening in every part, in every point, of boundless space ! How the soul then detaches itself from earth ! how it rises, how it soars from splendour to splendour ! how it is rapt, and borne away into the bosom of God ! Ah ! let him come to Larissa ! let him come, whoever he be, that has had the misfortune to suffer himself to be seduced by the vain sophistries of incredulity ! let him come and breathe the pure ethereal air of the mountain ! let him come and here contemplate that azure vault in which millions of orbs appear to be hung like so many torches to enlighten the darkness of night ! let him come to see the great host of heaven pass before him ! and, at the sight of such marvellous order, of so regular, so constant, a march, at the sight of so much beauty, so much grandeur, amazed, confounded, he will sink on his knees be-

fore Him, who, by a sign of his almighty will, created all these things ; and from his heart, moved, softened, filled with admiration, gratitude, and love, will escape, in spite of him, these words of praise in which the royal prophet proclaimed the glory of the Most High :—" The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work !"

I cannot sufficiently admire the holy activity of Father Vital. The first to rise, it is he who rings the *Angelus* ; presently afterwards he performs mass. As soon as he leaves the church, he is surrounded by a multitude of invalids, who have thronged from all parts to receive from him the relief of different kinds which they need. He sends none away without it : he listens to their complaints, he cheers them, he dresses their wounds, even the most disgusting ; he gives them advice, medicines, bread, vegetables, money, as far as the poverty in which he lives allows him. In the course of the day, he works in the garden, superintends the arrangement and cleaning of the church and sacristy, and enters into all the details of the household, which he directs with order and frugality. The change of occupations is the only recreation that he enjoys, and he is always busy when night overtakes him.

He has had the coffin made that is to receive his mortal remains : he visits it frequently, and he looks at it with the same joy that the worldly man would look at his new-built mansion. If he happens to betray any feeling of pain, it is because he is not already in possession of it. " There is my last home," said he ; and then, with the ardour of a saint, he added :—" My soul is too

long a stranger ; who shall give it wings, that it may fly away to the place of its rest !”

Still, notwithstanding this continual thought of death, and amidst this impatience for the bliss of another life, he manifests in his habitual intercourse a cheerfulness the most unaffected and the most amiable.

From Larissa you perceive in the neighbourhood a convent of catholic Armenians, where at this moment resides an archbishop, a man of extraordinary merit. I have been more than once to pay him my respects, and he received me with great urbanity. He did me the honour to invite me to dinner, and, out of consideration for me, the arrangements were in the European fashion, that is to say, the dishes were placed on a table, at which we sat on chairs, and not on the floor, according to the custom of the East. Priests waited upon us. On entering, they bent the knee to the archbishop ; a mark of respect paid him by all ecclesiastics, when they come into his presence.

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### LETTER XLIII.

DEPARTURE FROM LARISSA — MOUNTAINS OF THE LEBANON — PICTURESQUE VIEW — THE EMIRS FERES, SOLIMAN, AND ABBAS — MOUCROS — THE MOTOUALIS — THE MARONITES — THE DRUSES — DAIR-EL-KAMAR, THE CAPITAL OF THE DRUSES — BTEDDIN, THE RESIDENCE OF THE EMIR BECHIR, PRINCE OF MOUNT LEBANON — MARONITE BISHOP — DINNER FROM THE KITCHEN OF THE PRINCE — THE PALACE — INTERVIEW WITH THE EMIR — HIS WIFE — VISITS TO HIS THREE SONS — HORN WORN BY THE WOMEN OF MOUNT LEBANON — DEPARTURE FROM BTEDDIN — M. DE LA MARTINE. .

Beyrout, September 12, 1832.

It was not without regret, my dear Charles, that I tore myself away from the peaceful and happy monas-

tery of Larissa. Though impatient to continue my tour of Mount Lebanon, I could not resolve to part from the venerable man, with whom I had passed such delicious moments. On leaving him, my eyes filled with tears ; I clasped him to my heart ; I fell at his feet to receive his blessing, and we parted.

I took with me, as dragoman, a young Arab, named Francis, who has lived thirteen years in Rome, where he distinguished himself by proficiency in his studies, and who now holds the office of rector in a seminary of Maronites. We were accompanied by two moucros ; a mule carried my baggage.

I intended in the first place to go to Bteddin, to visit the Emir Bechir, prince of Mount Lebanon, who resides there. This prince and his family are accounted Mussulmans by the Turks, but it is certain that in secret they profess the catholic religion. I have even been assured that the emir made a formal avowal of this fact to Ibrahim Pacha, who was not at all displeased at it. I was obliged to return to Beyrout, to apply to the Austrian consul for such papers and letters of recommendation as I should want. M. Laurella gave me with pleasure a letter for his brother-in-law, physician to the prince, and another for the prince himself. I also took with me some for the catholic Maronite bishop, at whose residence I intended to lodge.

Next morning, at five o'clock, as we were leaving Beyrout, we found in our way a regiment of Egyptian infantry performing the exercise. Unused to the rolling of the drum, our horses took fright, and we had some difficulty to make them go forward.



We first crossed a plain covered with firs, and, two leagues further, we entered the mountains of Lebanon. Some women, with baskets containing fresh figs, offered them to us; they were the best that I ever tasted. They refused to put a price upon them, and accepted with thanks what I thought fit to give.

As we proceeded, the scenery became more and more picturesque. Several detached hills exhibited the form of truncated cones. On their summits we perceived large houses and buildings, which had the appearance of castles. On the left, the view extended over the chain of the Lebanon; on the right were to be seen Beyrout, its environs, its road, and the sea. The foot was covered with olive-trees.

Struck by the aspect of one of those sites, crowned with a building, which to me appeared magnificent, I exclaimed:—"Happy the man who owns that dwelling!"

"Happy!" repeated my dragoman, in a low tone, that he might not be heard by the persons of our retinue; "happy!" he repeated a second time, heaving a deep sigh! . . . . "he is deprived of sight!"

"And by what accident?"

"Alas! he is one of the emirs whose eyes were put out, and their tongues cut off by command of the emir Bechir, the reigning prince of the mountain, after a victory which he had gained over a party that was hostile to him. Three emirs," continued he, "underwent this operation, Feres, Soliman, and Abbas, and all three were his nephews! Bechir's wife, and the family of the condemned princes, throwing themselves at the feet of the conqueror, in vain solicited their pardon. The manner

in which the punishment was inflicted is horrible. The mouth was forced open, and the tongue, being pulled forward by an iron hook, was half cut off. The ramrod of a pistol, being made red-hot, was then thrust into their eyes.

“The emirs, or princes, who reign on the mountain,” continued my dragoman, “are, as you probably know, of the family of Schahab-Druse. The first of that name came from the province of Hourad and the town of Schahbas ; the emir Joseph Schahab is one of the latter. He whom you are going to visit has governed for thirty-two years. He first destroyed the Gemblati faction, which acknowledged Joseph, surnamed by it Suzbecki, as chief ; and, having attained the supreme power by his valour, he has annihilated, in its turn, the very faction to which he owed his elevation.”

This prince has three sons. The eldest, the emir Kassem, is not very bright, but he is an excellent man, and extremely polite to strangers. The second, the emir Khalil, is a good soldier ; he is brave, but, like his elder brother, not particularly intelligent. The third, the emir Amin, directs all the affairs : he is his father’s favourite and right hand ; he is subtle, crafty, and is accounted one of the first living Arabian poets.

The heat was suffocating. Our moucros made it a pretext for stopping every moment, not so much to rest themselves or their horses, as to prolong the journey, and to get more wages. In Syria and Palestine these moucros are extremely rude and selfish ; there are few travellers but have reason to complain of their incivility and excessive greediness. One of the greatest miseries of the

pilgrim is to find himself, in a manner, at the mercy of such fellows, without any knowledge of the language of the country; and it is a great deal worse when they have contrived to gain over the interpreter, as was the case with me on the banks of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. On this occasion, I might have reached Bteddin the same evening, had not their perverseness reduced me to the necessity of passing the night near a brook, wrapped in my carpet, which served at once for bed and bedding.

Next morning, at dawn, I roused my caravan, and we resumed our route. The road was very bad. Arid mountains, deep precipices, had succeeded the beautiful scenery which I had admired the preceding day: it was but now and then that landscapes less dreary met my view. The hamlets through which we passed were inhabited by Druses, who are most numerous in this part of the Lebanon.

Some writers have confounded, under the general appellation of Druses, the three principal nations inhabiting the Lebanon. These nations differ in religion and origin, and have nothing in common but their antipathy to the Turks, and their submission to the same chief, the prince of the mountain: they are the Motoualis, the Maronites, and the Druses, properly so called.

The first, to the number of seventy or eighty thousand, occupy the lower part of the mountains, and extend to Balbeck. They are Mahometans, of the sect of Ali, cousin-german and son-in-law of the Prophet. This Ali was to have succeeded his father-in-law as caliph; being unable to carry his election, he retired to Arabia,

revised and modified the doctrine of Mahomet, and gained numerous partisans by permitting many things which his rivals prohibited ; so that, in the year of Christ, 656, he found himself at the head of a formidable sect in opposition to that of Omar. The tribes of the Motoualis, who finally settled in the Lebanon, and mingled with the Druses, follow, one may say, in all points, the civil and religious customs of the Persians, from whom they are descended. They would deem themselves polluted if they were to have communication, not only in their prayers, but even in their repasts, with any person of a different creed.

The Maronites are catholic Christians, following the Syrian ritual. They are scattered over the valleys towards the centre of the Lebanon, and on the elevated points of the loftiest of its mountains. They extend also to the environs in the dioceses of Giblet, Botron, and Tripoli.

Respecting the origin of their name, historians do not agree : some assert that it is derived from Maronea, a town of Syria, mentioned by Ptolemy ; others say that they were thus called after a man named Maron. But among these latter there is a difference of opinion. On the one hand, it is affirmed that he was a heretic, attached to the errors of Macarius, patriarch of Antioch, condemned in 681, at the sixth general council ; on the other, it is maintained that he was the celebrated anchorite Maron, who lived in the fourth century, to whom one of the yet extant letters of St. John Chrysostom is addressed, and whose life was written by Theodoret. You will guess, my dear friend, that the latter is the notion adopted by the Maronites.

The Maronites form of themselves a population of nearly two hundred thousand souls, most of whom are scattered in a multitude of villages, built amphitheatrically on the sides of the mountains, and almost to their very tops. Some of these villages are so close that it would be easy to pass in a few minutes from one to the other, if, instead of making the endless circuits which you are obliged to do by the steepness of the rocks or the depth of the gorges and precipices, you could traverse, as the bird flies, the space which separates them. They are pointed out by the flourishing state of cultivation of the contiguous lands, the soil of which has most frequently been brought thither by active industry. The buildings present nothing that distinguishes them from the hamlets of Palestine, unless it be the kind of castle which is the residence of the sheik, to whom the administration and the police of the place belong.

The vulgar language is the Arabic, and the learned language, which very few understand, is the Chaldean. It is in the latter that divine service is performed.

The monastic life is nowhere held in greater veneration : it is infinitely more respected and better appreciated, even by the infidel, than it is in the West, by many who still call themselves Christians. The number of the monasteries is considerable. They belong to different orders, but among these that of St. Anthony holds the first rank. You perceive them on the most rugged crags, and always at some distance from other habitations. The monks live there secreted, in a manner, and cut off from all intercourse. Their apparel is mean and coarse ; they never eat meat, and but very seldom

drink wine. Their principal occupations are prayer, manual labour, and agriculture : and they practise the most generous hospitality.

As for the Druses, properly so called, their origin is more uncertain than that of the two preceding tribes. According to some, they are thus named after the country which they inhabit. If we may believe the most accredited traditions of the country, they are descended from the small remnant of the Crusaders, who, after the last disasters of the Christian army, took refuge and settled in this part of the Lebanon, under the conduct of the Count de Dreux, one of the bravest of the French nobles, whose name they assumed. The chronicles add that, having fortified themselves amidst these deserts, they contracted marriages with the females of the neighbouring villages ; and that, having no priests, they gradually forgot the catholic religion, and at length ceased to be Christians without becoming Mussulmans.

Part of them are reputed to be idolaters : they are said to worship an ox or a calf ; and it is stated as a certain fact, that they keep in their houses figures of those animals.

Others, who are called among them Ukkals, that is, enlightened, in opposition to the vulgar, whom they term Djahels, or ignorant, have retained several Christian dogmas. They never swear, and make profession of exemplary piety. The highest in dignity live in a state of celibacy. They consider themselves as the purest of mankind, and regard as a pollution the slightest contact with the things by them reputed profane. They wear a white turban, in token of their purity.

The turban of the others is in general of black or red silk.

You may read, as I have read, in the work of a certain philosophic traveller, that "several of the Druses admit the transmigration of souls; that others worship the sun, moon, and stars; that, among the Turks, they affect the habits of Mussulmans, frequent the mosques, perform their ablutions, and say their prayers; that, among the Maronites, they go to church, and use holy water; that, urged by the one or the other, they are easily persuaded to receive either circumcision or baptism." These are points on which I have not been able to collect information sufficiently positive to affirm any thing; points which have been formally contradicted by geographers, and which I am the less disposed to believe, because the veracity of the writer who has advanced them is more than suspected.

A fact much more incontestable is, that, brave and warlike, a character which they have in common with the Motoualis and the Maronites, they always join the latter to defend the access to their mountains against the Turks, to whom, in other respects, they remain subject; and that they would not endure an oppressive yoke, unless from absolute inability to shake it off. Hospitality is their favourite virtue: their manners are mild; still they carry jealousy to a great length, and, like the Mussulmans, never allow their women to show themselves, unless veiled. In general, the only labour in which they engage is of the agricultural kind, principally the cultivation of the vine and mulberry-tree. The scattered population amounts to about one hundred thousand souls.

At ten in the morning, we came in sight of their capital, which in reality is but a considerable village. It is called Dair-el-Kamar, which signifies "House of the Moon." It is situated on the side of a hill, at the foot of which runs the brook Damour.

In advancing, we perceived, through thick clouds of dust which rose above the town, a great number of men upon the roofs. As soon as we entered, we discovered that this dust proceeded from some houses which they were pulling down. These houses belonged, we were told, to sheiks of the Druses, who, adhering to the Porte, had fled to the army of the Grand Signor, to serve their legitimate sovereign against the Egyptians, and against the emir, who had become Ibrahim's ally. Bechir, in revenge, caused their dwellings to be demolished, and their mulberry-trees to be cut down. A circumstance which caused me not less surprise and pain than this spectacle of destruction and ruin, was to see, besides the buildings which were falling with a crash under the hatchet and the hammer, Druses and Turks, cross-legged, with pipes in their mouths, watching with a stupidly tranquil look the devastation of the property of their kinsmen and friends; and not far off, traders, in bazars abundantly stocked, displaying and selling their goods quite covered with dust, and appearing wholly engrossed by their gains and profits. At some distance farther, they were dragging some unfortunate creatures to prison; and a troop of boys, with the thoughtlessness of their age, were laughing and playing as they ran after them.

I stopped a few moments in a convent of Maronites,



whence I despatched a messenger to the emir's physician, to acquaint him with my arrival, and to request him to give information of it to the bishop, to whom I was recommended.

On leaving Dair-el-Kamar, you perceive Bteddin, which is only a short league distant. The prince's palace and the buildings belonging to it, standing on the summit and slope of the hill, great part of which they occupy, present an admirable view. The mass of building, the trees, the cascades which embellish this abode, are the more striking, because the stranger is far from expecting so much grandeur and magnificence.

I entered Bteddin at eleven in the forenoon. I proceeded at once to the residence of Monseigneur Abdallah, who welcomed me in the most amiable manner, and immediately sent to inform the emir of my arrival. In a few minutes, he received a note in which his highness intimated that I should be admitted to his presence at four in the afternoon. Meanwhile, he directed that every attention should be paid, and that I should be supplied with refreshments from his own kitchen.

At one o'clock, several officers and a numerous train of servants came to the bishop's. They served up dinner for us on an enormous round table of tin, about six inches in height. The bishop and myself were the only persons at table, at which we sat cross-legged on cushions. About twenty small round cakes, almost as thin as a sheet of paper, were thrown by me, and I was provided with a silver spoon and fork. The bishop ate after the fashion of the Arabs, that is, with his fingers; like them he thrust his cake into the dishes, and scooped

up with it what he wished to take. The dinner was not eatable. It was a load of viands in a sea of melted butter. An officer of the prince's kitchen, constantly on his knees beside me, held a large silver goblet with water, which he handed to me, from time to time. This servile attitude was distressing to me : all my intreaties could not prevail upon him to rise. It was only by hurrying my meal that I could deliver myself from so degrading a politeness.

At four o'clock, I repaired to the palace, accompanied by the bishop and my dragoman. In front of that edifice there is an immense court, in which four or five hundred horses, bridled and caparisoned, were picketed. Their beauty, the richness of their housings, mostly of different colours—the brilliant dress of the riders, continually in motion to carry the orders of the prince—the successive arrival of the sheiks and grandees of the country, coming to pay their respects to the emir—had there been nothing to see but this, it would have been sufficient to compensate for the trouble of the journey.

From this court, you pass through a spacious porch to a flight of steps, which leads to another court of not less extent, paved with white marble, in the middle of which rises a jet-d'eau, that falls into a spacious basin, likewise of white marble. On the sides are the offices, the lodgings of the attendants, the baths, &c. At the farther end is the entrance to the palace.

This court was full of military men, civil officers, and slaves. My arrival set them all in a bustle : they ran to and fro, and crowded around me. On reaching the door of the prince's apartments, I was introduced with the bishop and the dragoman.

The emir is an old man of seventy-three, of a strong constitution, and enjoying excellent health. A thick, long, white beard covers his whole chest. He is very ugly; but the richness of his dress, and a studied elegance, by diverting the eye, render the plainness of his person less striking. He received me in a large hall, round which were ranged, as usual, piles of cushions. Through an open door, at the extremity of this apartment, was to be seen another handsome room, adorned with a fountain. His highness had at his side a dagger enriched with diamonds; he was seated on a magnificent carpet, smoking. Officers, servants, white slaves and black slaves, stood at a respectful distance.

On appearing before him, I bowed in the European fashion: he returned the salutation by putting his hand to his heart, and made me a sign to sit down by him—I obeyed. The bishop seated himself near me; my dragoman remained standing. After the first compliments, I was offered refreshments, coffee, lemonade; and, at the same time, a napkin, richly embroidered with gold, was handed to me to wipe my mouth.

The emir asked me some questions: as I did not answer them so quickly as he wished, he conceived that I had a dislike to explain myself before the attendants. He made a sign with his hand, and the whole of them rushed towards the door, like a flock of sheep running away from a wild beast. The slightest gesture, the slightest motion of a despot, produces on the slaves who surround him an effect which cannot be described. If this motion, this gesture, is violent, it is like a thunder-bolt.

Bechir was grieved to learn that the emperor of Russia had withdrawn his consul-general from Alexandria : this intelligence gave him some uneasiness. He appeared to me not less affected by the information which he had received, that France was sending thirty thousand men to the Morea ; ten thousand of whom, he said, must have already arrived. He talked a good deal about my sovereign, the emperor of Austria, and the death of the duke of Reichstadt, for whom he seemed to feel much interest, and made me promise not to quit his residence without calling again.

On leaving him, I was shown over his palace, which I found less remarkable than I had at first imagined it to be. His officers conducted me into several rooms, where the gilding was lavished with extreme profusion, but without taste ; and they were astonished that I was not enraptured at so much magnificence. The only thing that struck me by its beauty was the bath, which is of marble. I was assured, however, that the harem is the most splendid part of the palace ; but that I did not see. The physician and a catholic Armenian bishop, the confessor of the princess, are the only males who have the privilege of entering it. I have used the term *harem*, because the Arabs continue to give that appellation to the wing inhabited by the emir ; though, contrary to the custom of the princes of the mountain, he has but one wife.

Though advanced in years, he is married to a second wife, only sixteen years old, for whom he shows the fondest affection. When, after he had lost his first wife, who was older than himself, he thought of forming a new

connexion, he sent a person to Constantinople to buy for him three young Georgian slaves to choose from : for the sum of forty-three thousand piastres, his commission was executed. The youngest was selected, instructed in religion, baptized, and united to the prince : the two others became her servants. Magnificent presents, including diamonds of great value, were made to the bride. She was worthy of the attentions and the generosity of her husband for her amiable disposition, her prudence, and, above all, for an extraordinary modesty, that is not affected by the high rank to which she has been raised. But what is, perhaps, still more remarkable, her two companions, who had an equal right to hope to become princesses, content with their lot, wait upon her most assiduously, without envying her better fortune.

From Bechir's palace, I went to the residence of the emir Amin. He was that day giving audience. Among the throng which filled the hall, I remarked the grandees of the mountain, whom it was easy to distinguish, because they were seated, while all the other persons present were standing. Amin received me very graciously, made me sit down by him, and asked me a great number of questions, but with such volubility, that my dragoman had scarcely time to interpret them, and I to utter a few words in reply. The ravages of the cholera made him uneasy ; indeed to me he appeared greatly alarmed. Our conversation took place in the presence of the whole assembly : grandees, servants, slaves, all listened, laughed, or looked grave, according to the nature of the subjects spoken of. Most of them joined in the conversation : this is customary ; and, to judge from the impression

produced upon me, nothing is more embarrassing for a stranger.

I then went to the emir Khalil's. I found him superintending the wainscoting of a room. The prince has a mania for building. It is a great chance that a room pleases him for six months; he is frequently tired of it sooner: he then pulls it down, builds another on a new plan, decorates it with fresh ornaments; and, before he has inhabited it many weeks, he begins to dislike that. Seated on a velvet cushion, he was smoking his pipe, amidst cabinet-makers, carpenters, and locksmiths; who, with hatchets, hammers, and files, made a noise that stunned you and set your teeth on edge. Like his brother, he desired me to sit down by him, ordered refreshments to be brought me, and talked to me about war. I have already told you that he is a good soldier: he has distinguished himself in the service of Ibrahim; and, when his father, the emir Bechir, had to fight the parties which disputed the supreme authority with him, he was ably seconded by Khalil. The latter is, nevertheless, without appointment and without authority.

My last visit was to the emir Kassem, who resides in a separate palace. He received me with the utmost politeness. He is considered as the least clever of the prince's three sons. All I know is, that I thought him the most amiable of the whole family. He presented to me his son and his daughter, both extremely well-bred. The young princess, who is sixteen, possesses extraordinary beauty, and, what is more, extraordinary modesty. I was not a little surprised to see her wear on her head a prodigious horn; this is an article of

dress with almost all the married women of the Lebanon. The horn is longer or shorter, according to the rank of the individual; that of the princess is full two feet and a half long; they alone have a right to wear it before marriage. This singular ornament is in the shape of a speaking-trumpet. It is of silver or gold. The ladies of Mount Lebanon put a large veil over it. Their attachment to this appendage amounts in some even to passion. They never lay it aside, either in health or in sickness, or even on the bed of death: they expire in this head-dress. The horn is then sold, and the produce of it is usually spent in having masses said for the peace of the soul of the deceased: hence, perhaps, the affection which they manifest for this object.

There is another sort of horn, which some women wear on the side of the head. This covers the ear and the cheek, and its point projects beyond the shoulder. It nearly resembles, in form, the horn used by deaf persons.

The emirs Amin, Khalil, and Kassem, have a strong resemblance to one another, and are all remarkable for extraordinary corpulence. Their wives are the only society of their young stepmother.

These three brothers, and the prince, their father, as I have told you, are catholics; they are very punctual in the performance of their religious duties, but they do not go publicly to the church at Bteddin: they hear mass in a private chapel. This conduct appears to me the more extraordinary, since the greater part of the inhabitants of the mountain are catholics, and since the Turks are now without power, and the Egyptians very tolerant. The emir Bechir and his whole family pay

the utmost respect to the bishop : I even observed, when I visited the emir Kassem, that the princess, his daughter, kissed the hands of the prelate.

A magnificent catholic church is at this moment building at Bteddin : the expence is defrayed by the prince.

I had seen all that could interest my curiosity in this residence. Having determined to set out at night, on my return to Beyrout, I went to take leave of the emir. The prince lavished upon me marks of honour and distinction, in the presence of his court, and offered to give me not only letters of recommendation to the different authorities, but some of his guards for an escort, *so long* as I should be in his territories : but, as this would have been at once expensive and useless, I thanked him, and declined the offer.

I set out, at eleven o'clock, by magnificent moonlight. At noon, next day, I was at Beyrout. There I found Mousieur and Madame de Lamartine, with their young daughter, Julia. I cannot tell you how much I was delighted to see the illustrious author of the "Meditations." His poems have procured me many happy moments, and, in particular, his beautiful verses of "Hope" have often soothed and comforted my heart. It was a real happiness to me to have an opportunity of expressing my gratitude to him.

M. de Lamartine was going to make the same *tour* which I was finishing as a pilgrim. As I could stay but a few days at Beyrout, during that short interval I omitted no occasion of profiting by his society and enjoying his interesting conversation.

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## LETTER XLIV.

DEPARTURE FROM BEYROUT—TRIPOLI—M. LAFOND—ITALIAN RENEGADO—SPONGE FISHERY—MOUNTAINS OF LEBANON—VILLAGE OF EDEN—REMARKABLE WALNUT-TREES—SHEIK OF EDEN; HIS FAMILY—CEDARS OF LEBANON—MARONITE HERDSMEN—VALLEY OF BEKAA—BALBECK—CHARITY OF THE CATHOLIC ARABS—TEMPLE OF THE SUN—DAMASCUS—THE LAZARIST AND FRANCISCAN FATHERS—THE VIA RECTA—HOUSE OF ANANIAS—WINDOW FROM WHICH ST. PAUL WAS LET DOWN BY THE CHRISTIANS; CAVERN WHERE HE SECRETED HIMSELF—CATHOLIC CHURCHES—DESCRIPTION OF DAMASCUS—BAZARS—KHANS—MOSQUES—CARAVAN OF MECCA—POPULATION—FANATICISM.

Damascus, October 13, 1832.

I left Beyrout, my dear Charles, on the 14th of last month, and embarked at eleven o'clock for Tripoli. Though I have a great dread of sea-sickness, from which I always suffer exceedingly, still I preferred that mode of travelling to a journey on horseback, for two long days, on a scorching beach. It was not long before I repented my choice. At midnight, the sea, at first calm and tranquil, became so rough, that the master of our vessel, who had stood out too far from land, began to be very uneasy. The waves, following one another with frightful rapidity, came roaring around the vessel, frequently rising above it and threatening to engulf us. I looked sorrowfully at them, holding by the ropes, and regretting that I had not adhered to the resolution which I had more than once formed, not to expose myself again, unless in case of absolute necessity, to the fickleness of an element which had already involved me in serious dangers.

Near me was an Egyptian colonel, a man of most remarkable aspect, who had been severely wounded at

the siege of Acre. His wounds were far from healed: they gave him excruciating pain, and he moaned heavily. The mortal agony which he endured was legible in his countenance. I would fain have cheered him: he knew no more of my language than I did of his; my looks alone expressed the sympathy that I felt. He comprehended them, and appeared thankful. Alas! what services can a stranger render to a stranger in a fishing smack tossed by the waves, and in which the seafaring man himself sometimes finds it difficult to keep on his legs!

However, in spite of the rough weather, we made nearly seventeen French leagues in six hours, and at day-break found ourselves off Tripoli. We landed in the harbour, at the village called La Marina, about half a league distant from the town.

From the port I proceeded to Tripoli, and alighted at the convent of the Franciscans of the Holy Land. The only persons there were Father Fortunatus, president of the establishment, and another monk. Both made me most welcome. Several European officers in the service of the viceroy lodged or dined that day at the convent. What was my surprise to meet again with M. Lafond, a Frenchman, employed as surgeon-major in the Egyptian army, whom I had known at Jaffa. He appeared *not* less pleased than myself at this unexpected meeting, talked to me about his journey, inquired concerning my intended route, and proposed to accompany me. I accepted this obliging offer the more cheerfully, because he was perfect master of Arabic, and I could not have a more amiable or more capable interpreter.

There is nothing remarkable about the convent and the church, but the court before the entrance is very handsome ; it is paved with marble, and adorned with a large basin, from the centre of which rises a magnificent fountain. The garden is striking, from the number and the beauty of its fruit-trees, and also on account of its high trellises, so thickly covered with foliage as to be impervious to the rays of the sun : in their shade the community in general dines.

A few moments before we sat down to table, Father Fortunatus, who was walking there with me, took me aside, and said : “ I must apprise you, Father, that you will dine to-day with a young Italian, the commandant of the citadel, and captain in the regiment of the guards, who has turned Mahometan, and taken the name of Mustapha.”

“ What ! ” I exclaimed, hurried away by a transport of indignation, which I was not able to repress ; “ what ! would you make me dine with an apostate ! Surely, you cannot mean that ! no, no ; never, never ! ”

“ You are too nice : he dines here every day, and nobody objects to it.”

“ Indeed, I must confess, it is not what I think quite right.”

“ I am not the person who would strive to extenuate the heinous offence which he has committed. He was only seventeen at the time ; but he repents it : he means to leave this country as soon as he can obtain payment of a sum which the government owes him, and which he cannot do without, and is determined to seize the first opportunity to reconcile himself with the Church. With

the exception of this fault, he is an excellent man, and I assure you that, in his present disposition, he is better than a great many Christians."

"What say you? with the exception of this fault? Is not apostacy the most heinous of crimes?"

"I declare to you," continued the Father, "that this Mustapha protects all the Christians; that he not only bestows on them considerable alms, but that, in general, he renders us the greatest services; and it seems to me but reasonable to make some allowance for this conduct, and for his repentance."

"All this, Father, is well, very well; but all this cannot excuse his apostacy. I will not see him, still less dine in his company."

"I entreat you!"

"It is useless; I should think that I was sinning."

"I will take the sin upon myself."

We were still talking, when a party of officers came towards us. "There he is!" said the Father, "there he is! the foremost is he." A shudder seized me. I raised my eyes, and beheld a young man of about twenty-six, with an interesting countenance, and pale and melancholy look. He came up to me; he would have kissed my hand, but I drew it back with horror: he perceived it, and kept silence. I remarked myself that the settled sadness expressed by all his features had become still deeper; pity entered my heart, and triumphed over the repugnance which I felt to sit down to table with him.

He ate little. During dinner, an officer having called him Mustapha, the name by which he is known: "My name," said he, with a deep sigh, looking at me, "is Jean

François." I cannot describe to you the impression made upon me by those few words, uttered with courageous penitence. The horror which he had excited in me gave place to the tenderest compassion. "Poor Jean François!" said I, inwardly; and my soul lifted itself towards the God of mercy, imploring him not to forsake this unfortunate man. After dinner, when about to take leave of us, he came to me, and offered me his hand, without speaking a word: his looks seemed to say:—"Have pity on me!"—and I gave him mine, at the same time pointing to heaven.

He came to see me in the evening. Our conversation lasted till very late. I hope, from the infinite bounty of our merciful Saviour, that he will lose no time in returning to the bosom of the Church, and doing penance proportionate to the enormity of the offence which he has had the misfortune to commit.

Next morning, I began to explore Tripoli. It is a very ancient town, on which, from the very first, its harbour conferred great importance. Mention is made of it in the second book of the Maccabees (xiv. 1.). The Turks call it Tarabolas. The name of Tripoli, which the Greeks gave it, and which we have retained, signifies three towns, because it is, in fact, composed of three towns not far distant from each other, the principal of which belonged to the Syrians. It is seated at the foot of Mount Lebanon, and watered by the Nahar Kadischa, a river, which, being directed into several canals, at once supplies the wants of the town, and serves for irrigating the fields and gardens. The population, computed by some at ten thousand souls, is almost all Mahometan.

The number of the catholics is very small : there are, nevertheless, three convents ; that of the Franciscans, at which I lodged ; one of Capuchins ; and one of Barefooted Carmelites. Each of these houses is usually inhabited by only two or three monks, and sometimes contains but a single individual.

The environs are delightful, but unhealthy as a place of abode. Epidemic fevers prevail there, as in Cyprus, in the months of July, August, and September, and sometimes even later.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, this district, having been conquered by Baldwin, brother of Godfrey, was erected into the county of Tripoli, and subsisted under that name till the downfall of the Crusaders.

In one of my excursions, I made the acquaintance of M. Lombard, of Marseilles, who has been settled at Tripoli for some years. He, as well as his family, loaded me with civilities. It is one of the most hospitable houses that it has been my lot to meet with. The stranger, to what nation soever he belongs, is treated there with such attention and kindness as frequently make him forget the fatigues and hardships which he encounters in visiting these parts.

I went with M. Lombard's children to the beach, to see an establishment for the sponge fishery. From one hundred and fifty to two hundred Greek divers were engaged in this occupation, under the direction of the proprietor, who cannot carry on this business for his own profit without paying a yearly duty to the government. He is a Greek, a very amiable man, married to a French woman. He made me a present of a very fine sponge,

still attached to the part of the rock on which it grew. M. Lombard, senior, at whose house I left it, kindly promised to pack it up for me, and to send it to Beyrout, where I shall find it on my return.

Hitherto I had always remarked that, when labouring men returned home after the arduous toil of a long day, the first thing they did was to seek rest. The Greek divers presented a totally different spectacle: they were harassed with fatigue; and yet, on their return, I saw them frolicking, dancing, and frisking about, till they were out of breath.

About to resume my peregrinations, and embarrassed by my baggage, I resolved to buy an ass to carry it for me. I was speaking of this intention before some officers of Ibrahim's army, when one of them requested my acceptance of a donkey for which he had no further occasion, and which he thought very likely to suit me. In spite of my urgent entreaties, he would not allow me to reimburse, at least, what the animal cost him; and next day his servant brought me a two-year-old colt, very small, but strong, sturdy, and nimble as a deer: I could not possibly have found a beast of that species more intelligent, more willing, and more docile. Buried, in a manner, under his burden, his head alone was visible: in spite of this heavy load, he ascended the highest hills, without ever stopping, vying in speed with our horses, and sometimes even distancing them. In the evening weary and jaded, he would come and lie down by us on the carpets which we spread for ourselves to sleep upon, waiting to be relieved of his burden, and to be supplied with food; and next morning he trotted off again as

fresh as ever. I need not tell you what care I took of him: not trusting in this particular to my guides, not even to the one to whom I consigned my horse, I cheerfully shared my bread with him, and, grateful for the services that he rendered me, I would have composed, I would yet compose, a most glowing panegyric on his race, if feeling were sufficient to make a painter or a writer.

Accustomed to ride a horse, and to give him the preference in every thing, I had more than once laughed at the panegyric written upon the ass, by one of the most eminent poets of our age. On seeing how much I owed to mine, I reproached myself for my injustice, and thought that Delille had not duly appreciated his worth, when he said of him :—

The ass, with less of beauty, spirit, fire,  
Is substitute, not rival, to the horse.  
To the proud steed he leaves his stately step,  
His splendid trappings, and his haughty gait:  
A clown his teacher, and his lesson stripes,  
A sumpter-saddle all his finery,  
And all his fare a thistle.

To him Mars opens not his glorious school;  
No conqueror he — he aids the peasant's toil.  
When young, he has his graces, gambols, sports;  
Grown up, is patient, strong, and never tires;  
In sad old age his thankless owner pays  
By willing, persevering services.  
The farmer's and purveyor's sturdy drudge,  
With hollow flanks, bending beneath the load  
Of balanced panniers, to the tradesman rich,  
And frugal dame, he daily bears supplies,  
And feeds the City, fasting oft himself.  
With steady step, he clears the precipice;  
Knows well his way, his master, and his home.  
Which of man's servants is content with less?  
In poverty he lives, grows old, and dies.



Are you not astonished that, after the enumeration of so many qualities which render this valuable animal so worthy of interest, Delille should wind up with merely saying, that

He interests by the *hardness of his lot*?

I will add in confidence, and in all the simplicity of a pilgrim who has visited, as a Christian, the stable at Bethlehem, and the streets through which Jesus passed at the time of his solemn entry into Jerusalem, that in me the ass excites more than interest, that he appears to me with a sort of glory, when I recollect that he warmed with his breath the Lord of heaven and earth, the Saviour of the world, lying in his manger; and that he bore Him on the day when the children of the Jews, with palm-branches in their hands, accompanied his triumphal procession.

Forgive this digression, my dear Charles; I shall now return to my long journey.

On the 18th, I set out early in the morning with M. Lafond. We were accompanied by a servant and two guides. We took the road to Eden, a village of Mount Lebanon, eight leagues from Tripoli, and three from the Cedars. I had letters of recommendation for Boutros Karam, sheik of the place, celebrated for his hospitable attentions to travellers, and I had no doubt that we should be kindly received by him.

After an hour's ride over a plain, sprinkled with a few agreeably situated hamlets, we found ourselves at the foot of the mountains of the Lebanon, mostly quite bare, exhibiting nothing but rocks and precipices, on the declivities of which we perceived, at long intervals, a few olive-trees and mean scattered dwellings.

At noon, the heat having become insupportable, we halted near a poor-looking village, where we nevertheless hoped to be able to procure for money some refreshment. We asked for bread, eggs, butter, milk, fruit. "We have none of the things that you want," was the answer given by all to whom we applied: it was not their fault if we did not conclude that they lived upon air. Luckily, a peasant chanced to pass with a large basket of grapes: we bought his stock, and, seating ourselves in the shade, made an humble repast.

At three we resumed our march. We had proceeded two leagues, when we saw a sheik mounted on a fine horse, and followed by several armed attendants descending from the mountain. It was Boutros, at whose house I calculated upon lodging. This meeting seemed likely to derange my plans, and gave me some pain. I accosted him and delivered my letters. "I am very sorry," said he, "that I cannot return; Amin, son of the emir Bechir, sets out this evening to join Ibrahim, and I am obliged to hasten away to Tripoli to pay my court to him. But I beg that you will go forward," he added, "and be assured that you will be as well received at my house as if I were there. I shall be back again in a couple of days." And he immediately dispatched one of his servants to give notice of our speedy arrival.

As we advanced, Nature appeared more smiling and more luxuriant. Verdure, clumps of trees, a more vigorous vegetation, cheered us after the dreariness and the sterility of the country that we had been traversing. We soon found ourselves amidst magnificent scenery. Nothing can be more lovely than Eden and its environs.

Enchanted by the scene that met my view, I was no longer surprised that many, misled still more by the fertility of the soil and the beauty of the spot than by the identity of the names, should have taken so delightful a country for the terrestrial paradise.

I was particularly struck, on entering the village, by the walnut-trees, of prodigious height and thickness, from which the inhabitants were beating down the fruit. These gigantic trees were surrounded by a multitude of men, women, children, and young persons of both sexes, singing, dancing, and indulging in noisy mirth. These songs, this hilarity, this bustle, imparted to Eden an air of life and happiness which I had not perceived any where since my departure from Switzerland.

Meanwhile, the son of Boutros Karam, being apprized of our approach, came forth to meet us. He accosted us with as much politeness and kindness as if we had been old acquaintance, and he requested us to accompany him to the house where his father lived and where he was directed to receive us.

The dwelling of the sheik is a new-built edifice, the interior of which is not yet finished. We were ushered into the hall of the divan; our host declared that this should be my room, and he lost no time in paying us all the attentions of hospitality.

Boutros keeps, according to the custom of the country, a great number of servants. A certain grandeur pervades his establishment; the manners prevailing in it more nearly resemble those of Europe than they do anywhere else. By his orders, dinner was prepared; we took it, seated upon the floor on cushions and carpets, at

a circular table of tin, covered with a very handsome tablecloth. We, as well as the family, had napkins, knives, and silver forks—things not to be seen in the houses of the other sheiks of the Lebanon. As they had been apprized that I never ate butchers' meat, other dishes were provided for me, but so well dressed that I should almost have supposed them to have been the work of a French cook. During dinner the most marked attentions were paid to us, and so indeed they continued to be the whole time we were under that hospitable roof.

In the evening, I had to receive a great number of the inhabitants of the village, who were anxious to see me. Seated on the floor around me, these good people smoked after the fashion of the Arabs, chatted, and talked to me with a certain freedom of manner, yet at the same time full of civility and respect; and bawled very loud, as though, by raising their voices, they could render their language more intelligible to me. To the noise made by them was added that of the servants, coming, going, or stopping, detained by curiosity or a desire to be useful to me. Stretched myself on a cushion of crimson satin, which I had been forced to accept, it was impossible for me to answer the thousand questions addressed to me from all quarters by my visitors; and the extreme complaisance of M. Lafond, who kindly undertook to be my interpreter, was fairly tired of satisfying them. The apartment in which this scene took place was the hall of the divan, that had served a few hours before for our dining-room. At length, weary of talking and listening, annoyed by the smell of the pipes and still more by the smoke, which had become so dense that I could no longer

distinguish the persons about me, though it cost me an effort to disturb them, I determined to "break up the sitting."

Next morning, by sunrise, I proceeded to the church. It is very spacious, neatly adorned, and kept extremely clean. I passed a short time there, returning thanks to God for the blessings with which he had favoured my travels, and imploring a continuance of them for the future. I then visited some of the chapels; there are eight or ten of them, which surprised me the more as the village is not large. I afterwards learned that the monks of the neighbouring monasteries come thither every day to perform mass; and that, on account of the salubrity of the air, such of the Fathers whose health is impaired by age, austerities, or labour, frequently take up their residence for a time in the cells contiguous to these sanctuaries.

In the afternoon, I went to see the spring which is called the Fountain of St. Sergius, from the name of the convent that stands close to it. This spring is celebrated for the extreme coolness of its water. I had heard a great deal about it; but what I had been told appeared so exaggerated, that I had obstinately refused to believe it: nothing, however, is more true. Not having a goblet with me, and resolved, in case I should not find it so cold as it was described, not to afford cause for the objection that it had become warmer in the hollow of my hand, if I were to take it up in that manner, I knelt upon the ground to drink. My lips were instantly like ice, and I admitted, not without surprise, that I had never met with such a spring.

On the following day, Boutros returned to Tripoli. He appeared delighted to find us still at his house. His behaviour to us only heightened the idea which we had been taught to form of his politeness, his kindness, and all his hospitable and patriarchal virtues.

This good sheik has six children, two sons and four daughters. I had not seen either the latter or their mother : they keep themselves constantly shut up in the interior of the house, and veil themselves most carefully when they go to church. Yet, in my quality of monk, he thought it right to do me the honour of introducing me to them : an aged inhabitant of the mountain, who understood a little French, was my interpreter. I was received by these ladies with demonstrations of deep respect. When I entered, they made a low obeisance and kissed my hand. They were uniformly dressed in a gown of blue casimere, embroidered with silver. No sooner was I seated on the divan, than the eldest of the daughters came and covered my face with a veil, under which she held a perfuming-pan, whence rose a smoke having a most agreeable odour ; and afterwards sprinkled me with rose-water so profusely, that, overwhelmed by the heat, and being bareheaded, I was ready to faint. Conceive, if you can, my embarrassment to reconcile with politeness the efforts that I made to withdraw myself from so singular a ceremony. They were unavailing : I was obliged to submit to it.

After this aspersion, sweetmeats and coffee were set before me on a small table. My dress was evidently an object of curiosity for these ladies. They were particularly pleased with my chaplet of olive-stones from Geth-

semane. They perceived the crucifix which I am in the habit of wearing. When they were informed that it had lain upon each of the holy places, they took it, raised it to their lips with the most touching piety, and asked me several questions of religious import, which I had great pleasure in answering. They listened with a religious earnestness to the particulars which my long residence at Jerusalem and my excursions in the environs enabled me to give them.

On the day before my departure, a cause was brought to the tribunal of Boutros, who, in his quality of sheik, is judge in most of the disputes which arise among the inhabitants of his jurisdiction. I was present, and witnessed an act which perfectly characterizes the spirit of mildness, moderation, and indulgence, that guides his whole conduct. The case related to an ass which had been stolen from him four years before, and which his people pretended to have discovered among those of certain Bedouins who were travelling in the Lebanon. The ass and the Bedouins were seized and brought before the sheik. Whether it was out of love and zeal for justice, or with the sole view of paying court to the magistrate, that the charge was preferred, I cannot tell. But this I know, for I have had more than one occasion to remark it, that the number of courtiers, to the lowest as to the highest authority, is perhaps more considerable in Asia than in Europe, where that crew swarms. Be this as it may, the room was crowded with the multitude of accusers, all of whom cried out with a look of conviction, and their eyes stedfastly fixed on the animal: "Why, it is he! to be sure it is! he himself!"—"Though it is so

long since he was stolen," said another, "I knew him again; he is very little altered: those are his eyes, his ears, his hide, of a dark gray!"—"And the tail!" exclaimed a third. "Only look at it!—that rat's tail! The scoundrels! they have taken care to mutilate what he would have been most easily known by. It has evidently been cut." And all present began to pity the lot of the unfortunate donkey. M. Lafond interpreted what they said in the most humorous manner possible.

The accused Bedouin was a very handsome man. He had a defender: both spoke alternately with great calmness, and clearly proved that the imputation was false and calumnious. Every moment, however, a score of voices interrupted and contradicted them. The sheik listened without saying a word; but it was easy to read in his countenance on which side he perceived the truth. When the cause had been pleaded by both parties, he pronounced a sentence by which he acquitted the accused, grounding his judgment on the unsatisfactory reasons for the accusation, rather than on the allegations of the defendant, which, moreover, were unanswerable. Then, though respect imposed silence upon all mouths, it was evident from the mere inspection of their faces, that, mortified at having gained nothing by their officiousness, the accusers condemned the judge.

The inhabitants of Eden, in general, vie with their excellent sheik, as far as their circumstances permit, in kindness, and even generosity towards strangers. Whenever we went abroad, all were eager to pay us marks of attention and respect, and to anticipate us by offers of service. The children ran to meet us, bringing fruit



and flowers. The very washerwomen who saw us testified a wish to do something for us : they inquired, by very expressive signs, whether we had not shirts or other garments that wanted washing.

Every winter, the village is covered with snow for several months, and the cold there is very intense. In that season a few families only stay in the place : most of them descend into the plain of Tripoli, or to other not elevated situations, and there dwell till the return of the spring.

I left Eden at day-break, on the twenty-first. The sheik and his family were stirring : they had all risen to take leave of me. Deeply affected by this last attention, which crowned all the kindnesses that they had shown me, I laid my hand upon my heart, striving, by this gesture, to express to them my warm gratitude ; I then pointed to heaven, to tell them that we should there meet again some day ; and I departed, praying to God to reward with his choicest favours the piety and virtue of these good and generous hosts.

We took the way which leads to the cedars of Lebanon ; those cedars so celebrated in Scripture, to which are attached so many impressive recollections. The morning was magnificent. A countless multitude of birds warbled in the shade of the trees which covered them with their branches ; the grass in the meadows glistened with the pearls of the dew : it was still the rich and beautiful vegetation of Eden. At the distance of half a league, scarcely any vestiges of it were left : we then found ourselves in stony and difficult tracks.

Two leagues from Eden, we perceived, at the bottom of

a valley, the village of Beschierai. Its environs, which are tolerably well cultivated, gave a momentary relief to the eye, weary of seeing nothing but naked rocks and loose stones. On advancing, we discovered a mountain frightfully sterile, and partly covered with snow. A clump of verdure rises from the middle of the plateau, and attracts the more notice because it contrasts so strongly with all that surrounds it. This clump at times appeared, and was intercepted from our view, according to the windings of the road which we were obliged to follow. At length we were near enough to perceive that it was a small wood, and to distinguish trees of prodigious size : these were the cedars. Impatient to reach them first, I accelerated my pace. I was close to them, when all at once I perceived four horses, richly caparisoned, grazing, and near them a young Arab very elegantly dressed. He ran towards me, as if to prevent me from passing, and addressed to me some words which I could only explain to myself by the violence of his motion and the fire which sparkled in his eye. I halted, and waited to ascertain more precisely, by means of my interpreter, what he meant and what was the cause of his anger. At the same moment I saw a young female running as fast as she could, with an infant in her arms, towards the horses. According to the fashion of the ladies of the Lebanon, she wore an enormous horn, and a large veil over it. While I was looking at her, the Arab disappeared. In a few minutes I saw him retiring hastily, accompanied by two armed attendants. On the spot which they had quitted I found a stone altar, and upon it a brisk fire, in

which was burning incense, or a kind of gum that exudes from the cedars. My dress, and the swiftness with which I approached, had, no doubt, alarmed the young man and his female companion. Who were they? what were they doing? were they Druses? was that fire upon the altar used for some superstitious or pagan ceremony? I cannot tell.

A sojourn of a few weeks in Palestine and Syria is quite sufficient to enable you to appreciate the degree of credit due to the statements of certain travellers, when they relate to facts or details connected more or less with religion, and the faithful exposition of which would turn to its glory. But you must come to the Cedars, if you would know to what a length they have carried their endeavours to deceive the reader, and to abuse his credulity, even in the smallest things, in those which neither have nor can have any other than an indirect relation with the christianity which they hate. Listen to what is said by one of these writers, who has made the more dupes, because he is always accurate enough, whenever a feeling of pride and animosity does not impel him to violate truth.

“These far-famed cedars,” says he, “are like many other wonders; when close to them, you find that they are far from upholding their reputation. Four or five thick trees, all that are left, and which have nothing particular about them, are not worth the trouble that is taken to clear the precipices which lead to them.”

Would you not say, my dear friend, that a man who talks in this manner has taken the trouble to clear the precipices which lead to them, that he has closely

examined those trees, that he has counted them, and that his report is true.

But, in the first place, what seems to me to prove that the cedars in question are not so "far from upholding their reputation" as the writer would have us believe is, that this "reputation" has lasted some thousands of years; that from age to age they have been visited by celebrated men of all nations, not one of whom has said that he grudged his trouble; and that, in spite of the attempts made in our time to depreciate them, persons of no mean fame in the religious and literary world have not been afraid to encounter "the precipices which lead to them," and have given such accounts of them as have since encouraged more than one Christian, and even more than one merely curious traveller, to follow their steps.

And then, my dear Charles, if it be true that the author has taken "the trouble to clear the precipices which lead to the cedars," if it be true that he has examined them "closely," tell me if the philosophic mania must not strangely affect the sight. Instead of "four or five thick trees," I have counted at least thirteen or fourteen, not only as thick as the thickest trees that I ever met with in my many peregrinations, but so thick that several of them are six or seven fathoms in circumference. Some, at a certain height, divide into five or six principal branches, which, issuing from the same stem, form so many new trees, planted, as it were, in the trunk, and of such diameter that two men cannot span them. Their tops, proportioned to their prodigious bulk, rise majestically towards the sky, and resemble vast

domes of verdure, beneath which the Christian has the happiness to find altars erected to the God whom he adores, and the ungrateful philosopher, at least, a cool and delightful shade, where he may rest himself after his fatigue.

Had these cedars nothing else “particular” about them but their immense size, which attests their high antiquity, and confirms the traditions which represent them as having existed in the time of our Saviour, and even still earlier, would not this be enough to excite a curiosity wholly profane, especially if it be certain, as it actually is, that no traveller has ever seen the like to them in any other country, on any other mountain, of the globe; and could the real man of science, after examining this wonder of nature, reasonably grudge his “trouble” — he whom the desire of knowledge sometimes impels to travel over the world, to defy dangers, to climb the most rugged, the most inaccessible rocks, in the mere hope of finding — what? a new, an unknown plant, an herb of doubtful utility, or, perhaps, of no use at all!

Shall I give you my notion of the matter, my friend? I strongly suspect that it is because there is something too “particular” in the history of the cedars of Lebanon, that the poor philosopher, conceiving that he could not well omit noticing them, has contented himself with briefly observing, and by the way, as it were, that “those which are left have nothing particular about them.” The cedar of Lebanon is a tree of which frequent mention is made in Scripture. Its height, its incorruptibility, the fecundity with which it propagated itself on the mountain, often serve for points of com-

parison with the qualities and virtues of the righteous man. The cedar is called the tree of God. The temple of Solomon, and the palace of that prince, were of cedar; and the dimensions of the trees "which are still left" sufficiently explain why and how this wood was employed in preference, either to form by itself part of the sacred edifices, or to be introduced into the body of walls, which it equalled in thickness, and sometimes in length. Idolatry itself held these cedars in esteem, and deemed it worth while to encounter the precipices to see them. It employed them in the temple of its gods. Pliny relates that the roof of the temple of Diana at Ephesus was of this wood, and the ancients sometimes made colossal statues of it. Do you imagine that, if Volney had borne in mind merely these two "particulars," he would have shown such contempt and disdain for the Lebanon. For my part, when I observe with what complaisance he stops to describe the least important, nay, the most trivial things, without complaining of the trouble he has taken to come at them, whenever he does not meet in his way with objects which excite his irreligious hatred, I cannot think that I am slandering him in declaring that, if his route had carried him to Epire, he would not have failed to visit the grove of Dodona, even though he were destined to find there only "four or five" thick oaks, very far beneath their "reputation."

Be this as it may, the truth is, as I have just told you, that, instead of "four or five" cedars, I have seen thirteen or fourteen, exceeding in size all that I ever observed before. Foreign travellers, English, Dutch, French, who visited these parts in preceding centuries, remarked a

greater number of them ;\* and these cedars of the first magnitude are not the only ones. Near them grow three or four hundred others of different ages and smaller dimensions, some in detached groupes, others scattered irregularly around the large trees. These younger ones are in general very high, but of pyramidal form. Their evergreen foliage has been very aptly compared with that of the juniper ; their cones resemble those of the pine ; I brought some of them away with me. These cones are with difficulty detached from the tree. Their kernels yield a sort of gum, which has a very strong but agreeable smell.

Every year, on the day of the Transfiguration, the Maronites repair to the mountain and hold a festival, which they call the Feast of the Cedars. The patriarch goes thither, accompanied by several bishops, a great number of monks, and a considerable concourse of persons of their persuasion. Mass is performed at stone altars, set up at the foot of the thickest trees. Some have taken occasion, from this religious ceremony, to assert, that the Maronites do not believe the transfiguration to have taken place on Mount Tabor. This is an error : their service pointedly expresses the contrary.

With a view to preserve the most ancient of the cedars, and to prevent accidents that might lead to their destruction, the patriarch has thought it expedient to pronounce excommunication against every one who shall presume to cut the smallest branch without a formal permission. But the dread of incurring this penalty has not always been strong enough to prevent the offence ;

\* Travels of Maundrel, Thevenot, Bruyn, &c.

and I cannot help thinking that it is only by a special protection of Providence, that, in the course of so many ages, they have not all perished.

On leaving Beyrout, I had promised a young lady—one of the most amiable that I ever met with in my life, a girl, ten years old, with an angelic countenance, and embracing, in an extraordinary degree, intelligence, candour, and sweetness of disposition—Julia de Lamartine—to engrave on the thickest oak of the Lebanon the name of her father, that of her mother, and her own. I kept my word, though the execution proved a far more difficult task than I had imagined; and I congratulated myself on the success of my labour, when I considered that the illustrious poet, on coming to the Cedars, would find there the names of his wife and his daughter, “those two parts of his heart.”

We staid about four hours at the Cedars. Long did I walk about alone, amidst the religious gloom which they threw around me. My mind reviewed the records of their ancient glory: then, meditating on the long duration of their life, which led to salutary reflection on the brevity of the life of man, my soul cheered itself for the rapidity with which my days pass away by the thought of those eternal years which await it in a better world, of which the longevity of the trees that I was admiring is not even a shadow. I could not quit them without turning about twenty times to look at them, without long betraying involuntarily by my sighs the deep impressions which they left upon my mind.

It was too late to reach Balbeck the same day. We took the road to it, however, hoping to find by the way



some village where we might pass the night. We had first to ascend a steep mountain. As we advanced, whitish clouds, formed by the vapours of evening, rose from the low grounds, and looked like new mountains covered with snow, rising from the bosom of the valleys. The air became colder. On reaching the top, and on the point of descending the opposite side, we were obliged to alight, and to lead our horses, which had some difficulty to keep their legs. Some hours after sunset, we came to a spring of fresh water, and resolved to halt there till morning, though we had to apprehend attacks from the wild beasts, to which the rocks and the woods in the neighbourhood afford a retreat. I had heard M. Laurella, our consul at Beyrout, relate that, travelling some years ago in the environs, with an escort of twenty men, he fell in with ten or twelve tigers ; that his people were preparing to fire, but he prevented them ; and that the tigers had suffered them to pass without appearing to notice them. I recommended the like prudence to my people, and, by way of precaution, we lighted large fires. By daybreak we were traversing the extensive plain which leads to Balbeck. At seven o'clock, as the heat began to incommode us much, we turned into a meadow bordered by rocks, in which we had perceived two cabins formed of trelliswork. Around them were grazing a great number of cattle, tended by Maronite herdsmen. We went straightway to these poor people, and asked for some milk. They cheerfully offered us more than we wanted ; and gave us cream, new cheese, and bread baked in the ashes, which we ate with great relish.

They had perceived from my dress that I was a monk. After paying us all sorts of attentions, they came and humbly kissed my hand, and then loudly called their family scattered about the meadow. The boys, a few hundred paces off, were looking after the sheep. They all ran up, kneeling at my feet; they begged, they implored me to bless them. Oh! how I wished at the moment that, with the authority conferred by the sacred character of the priesthood, I could have fulfilled more completely the wishes of their faith! Ought I, because I had not the honour of being a priest, to hesitate to satisfy them? I thought not: and, raising my hands over them, I blessed them, and fervently besought Heaven to grant the prayers that I addressed to it in their behalf.

I was preparing to leave them, when I saw a woman advanced in years approaching with slow steps, and carrying with effort a large vessel full of water. It was the grandmother of the colony. I conceived at first that she was bringing this vessel to invite me to wash my hands, and was about to plunge them into the water, when M. Lafond apprized me of my mistake. She had brought it that I might do her the favour to bless it. Induced by the same motive which had determined me just before, and unwilling to grieve her by a refusal, I complied with her desire: the joy diffused over her countenance expressed her thanks.

At length, it was time to mount my horse again. All eagerly hastened to assist me, to touch my garments, to express the regret which they felt on account of our too prompt departure. We were at some distance, when, on

turning round, I saw them still on the threshold of the cabin, following me with their eyes, saluting me with their hands, and thus sending after me their last farewell.

I could not possibly deceive myself as to the motive of these extraordinary attentions. It was too evident that I ought not to consider them as paid to myself personally. A mere traveller I was, and I could be, to these generous herdsmen nothing but a stranger, worthy, at most, in the same degree as my companions, of the hospitable kindness which they had shown us. What was it, then, that had gained me such particular testimonies of veneration? My monastic habit, that white robe, that scapulary, that crucifix, had apprized them that I was in the service of the God whom they worshipped; and, in like manner, as the loyal subject honours, in the gown of the magistrate, in the sword of the warrior, the sovereign whom both serve, these kind herdsmen, Christians in spirit and in heart, had joyfully seized the occasion which I presented to them to honour Jesus Christ by their homage. On this subject, my dear friend, shall I communicate to you a reflexion which, in the course of the years that I have passed in the world, has often powerfully struck me? In the military uniform, or even in the dress that I was accustomed to wear, what marks of respect have I received, which would not have been paid me by most of those who did me that honour, if they had seen me in the robe of the Trappist! At the present day, more than ever, how many people are there from whom such or such a dress is sufficient to draw signs of contempt or esteem, expressions of love or hatred! Long before I embraced

the monastic life, I could not comprehend, and still less have I since been able to comprehend, how it is that a habit which implies a stricter obligation to serve the King of heaven and earth, to love one's brethren, to do them good, to set them an example of the virtues, to pray for them, should become to certain persons an object of derision and of insult. Whenever I have endeavoured to fathom the reasons of such conduct, I have been obliged to pause, that I might not arrive at what I would fain not discover, irregularity of mind, and disgraceful passions of the heart. Not but that I am well aware that, in religion and the priesthood, there are men who disgrace their cloth; but, in this case, to be at all reasonable, we ought to confine our scorn to the person. Who would ever think of cursing the uniform of the brave, because it has sometimes covered the shoulders of a coward?

At ten o'clock we perceived the long valley of the Bekaa, which is the Coelo-Syria of the ancients. It is an extensive and fertile plain, constantly irrigated, and frequently flooded by the waters descending from the mountains. The frequent incursions of the Arabs, since the middle of the last century, do not permit all the advantages promised by the excellence of the soil to be derived from it. It is very ill cultivated. Beyond it we begin to discern Balbeck, at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon.

In the middle of the Bekaa stands a lofty pillar, the appearance of which excited my curiosity. I am not aware that it is mentioned by any traveller: I resolved to visit it. As it was out of our way, my guide did all

he could to divert me from my purpose, representing that I should meet by the way with obstacles and difficulties which I should have great trouble to conquer. I answered only by clapping spurs to my horse, and in half an hour I was at the foot of the pillar. It is about forty feet in height. It stands on a large base, and is surmounted by a capital. A considerable number of ravens were perched upon it; at the noise of my approach, they greeted me with loud croakings, and flew away. I know not to what age or to what nation this monument belongs; there is no inscription to indicate the period or the motive of its erection; and none of the persons whom I have questioned has been able to furnish me with information of any weight concerning its origin. At Damascus, indeed, I learned from M. Baudin, the agent of France, that it is commonly called Amoad-Aiat, after the neighbouring village, and that the people of the country have a notion that it covers two tombs.

Balbeck is the Heliopolis, or city of the Sun, of the ancients: it is situated on the slope of a hill. A dilapidated outer wall, scarcely two fathoms in height, in those parts which are in the best preservation, furnishes a pretty correct idea of its former extent: but, with the exception of a few wretched buildings, and a small number of mud huts, the interior is either vacant or covered with rubbish. The residence of the bishop is itself but a sort of cottage, darker, and less roomy than that of a peasant in Europe. The population which, about the middle of last century, still amounted to five or six thousand, is now reduced to fewer than eight hundred, who have no other means of subsistence than

what they derive from the laborious cultivation of an almost barren soil. The political and civil authority is in the hands of an emir, who, by that title, is but the vassal of the pacha of Damascus.

I was unwilling to incommode either the bishop or the inhabitants by soliciting hospitality; and, on the other hand, I wished to be as near as possible to the famous temple of the city of the Sun, one of the most magnificent and least injured of any that have been left us by antiquity. I went and selected a resting-place near it, under some trees by the side of a mill.

I had not been there above an hour, when I saw a young lad, coarsely attired, but with a most interesting countenance and modest look, coming towards me. He brought a cheese and four small loaves, sent by his parents, catholic Arabs, who, informed that there was a pilgrim monk under the trees, had hastened to supply him with a dinner. I cannot tell you how this pious attention affected me. The abject distress prevailing at Balbeck and throughout the whole country, the personal poverty of those who thus shared their food with me, the earnest manner of the little messenger who made signs for me to eat, the joy which he manifested at having executed the commission of his kind parents, were more than enough to move me, and to make me set a high value on their present. No sooner had he left me than, with eyes fixed on what had been brought me, I *could* not repress my tears, and again they flowed, when I afterwards lifted to my mouth this gift of indigence. In the evening, the messenger brought me another supply like that in the morning, to which his mother

had added some cooked onions and eggs. He bowed, laid his offering at my feet, and retired. At this second visit, I wished to make him some recompense ; he obstinately refused it for a long time, and at last accepted it only for fear of giving me pain. Alas ! what in the sight of God was my generosity, compared with the admirable charity of these poor Arabs to a stranger, whom they had never before seen, from whom they had nothing to hope, and whom they were not likely ever to behold again !

Meanwhile, I was anxious to gratify the impatient curiosity that I felt to visit the temple of the Sun. Perhaps I ought to say no more than that nowhere in Asia are there ruins so magnificent, so vast, as almost to make one doubt whether those who erected the buildings, of which they are the relics, belong to the same race of men as people the earth at this day. Notwithstanding the immense progress of dynamics in the last centuries, more than one man of science would still deny the very possibility of so gigantic a monument, if the facts were not there to humble and confound modern weakness and impotence : suffice it for me to say, that I shall not undertake to give you a description of it. This task, moreover, has been performed, imperfectly, it is true, by eminent writers, in such a manner as to daunt any one who should be tempted to take up the pencil after them. Unfortunately, their works, especially that of Wood, are scarcely to be met with but in public libraries, and thither he must go to consult them who would fain make himself acquainted with the most astonishing wonders of ancient architecture,

without exposing himself to the hazards of a long journey. A stranger to the science, and scarcely able to stammer the language of the arts, I shall not even attempt to give you a sketch of them. You will recollect that I am but a pilgrim, and must be content with a few traits.

Under the name of the famous ruins of Balbeck are comprehended those of two principal temples, dedicated to the worship of the Sun, the more considerable of which is situated to the north-west of the other. The loftiness of the walls, and of such of the columns as time has spared, the boldness of the vaulted roofs, the incredible bulk of the stones in their various dimensions,\* the delicacy, the richness, the variety, the profusion of the sculptures and ornaments, the numberless fragments of capitals, friezes, entablatures, cornices, with which the inner area is strewed, those which you meet with scattered about everywhere outside the enclosure, excite, ravish, and finally tire admiration. The soul has need to take breath, as it were, and to rest from the fatigue of admiring, that it may begin again and admire anew. All that it has hitherto considered as great now appears little. The feelings which it experiences, at the same time that the eye and the thought are wandering from object to object, are reproduced, developed, multiplied, and succeed each other with such rapidity, that it can scarcely distinguish, and still less find expressions to

\* Most of them, that is to say, the smallest, are from eight to ten feet long, and six or seven broad and thick: others, and in no small number, are thirty feet long; some sixty feet by twenty, and fourteen or fifteen thick. One, left unfinished, being cut on three sides only, is sixty-nine feet long, thirteen broad, and the same thick.



describe them. What I can best explain to you is the situation of the different edifices which these ruins still permit one to observe, without scrupulously binding myself to strict mathematical accuracy.

The first, that is the larger of the two temples, stands in the direction from east to west, on a line of such extent that the eye cannot measure it. A magnificent portico, raised upon an esplanade, bounded by two pavilions, formed the entrance. In the space between the pavilions were twelve columns, the bases of which are still distinguishable.

Beyond this portico is an hexagonal court, nearly two hundred feet in diameter, enclosed by a series of regular chambers or chapels, opening to the interior; and the roofs of which, now in ruins, were supported by columns systematically arranged, and in equal number on every face.

This court is but the vestibule, if I may be allowed the expression, to another more elevated and much more spacious court, to which you ascend by a very gentle slope. This second court is square. On the right and left, against the lateral walls by which it is enclosed, are backed seven large chapels, the second and fifth of which are semicircular, and the others square, without any other entrance than the vacant space between the columns on which the roofs rested. In the interior of them you perceive a sort of niches, either salient, or formed in the wall; destined, no doubt, to receive the statues of the deities worshipped there, as well as the sun.

Advancing from the middle of the quadrangular court, in a right line towards the east, you enter the sanctuary,

that is to say, the temple, properly so called, to which all the preceding buildings are but accessories. It is a parallelogram, about two hundred and seventy feet long, and rather more than half as wide. It presents ten columns in front, and nineteen on either flank. Of these columns there now remain but six, between the ninth and the sixteenth of the left flank. Their enormous thickness and their height, which is upwards of seventy feet, assist one to form some idea of what the temple was when entire. In the course of ages, the winds deposited on the entablature, which still covers their tops, a heap of vegetable dust, in which they afterwards sowed the seeds of a multitude of plants, whose stems, foliage, and, at certain seasons of the year, flowers, hanging down in garlands, produce an effect that is quite picturesque. These six columns are to be seen at a great distance. We perceived them between the trees of Balbeck, as soon as we entered the valley, which we traversed in the morning.

To what age, to what nation, belongs this monument? This archæology, disconcerted by the silence of history, has not been able to determine in a precise manner. Some writers assign for its date the reign of Antoninus Pius, that is, the middle of the second century. It must be admitted that the Corinthian order, which prevails throughout the whole of the architecture, and some inscriptions, in which the name of that prince occurs, seem at first to favour this opinion. But the perceptible differences to be remarked, either in the quality or the cutting of the stones and the marbles used in the construction of the sacred edifices — the evidently more

antique character of certain ornaments — the little correspondence, or even harmony, which they have with other ornaments, in a more modern style and taste — and the particular type of certain subjects, represented by the sculpture—all incline the inquirer to go back much farther to discover their real origin ; and, in thus going back, they are all lost in the night of ages, where not the least glimmer of light breaks through the profound darkness. The Arabs, who care little for the objections of science, are the only persons who have not been puzzled to tell the epoch and the author of the wonders of Balbeck. They ascribe the honour of them to Solomon, whose name is always upon their lips, whenever a question arises concerning the founder of buildings, anterior to the Christian era, of which some traces are yet to be found in Palestine or in Syria : and to explain how so many stones, so many prodigious blocks, whose bulk, length, and weight appear so totally disproportionate to the strength of man and the power of the levers known at the period which they assign, could be extracted from the quarry, cut, removed, and raised, they hesitate not to assert that the prodigy of so inconceivable an operation is due to genii, who performed the work under the orders of the great king.

The second temple, to the south-west, is of a later period. The name of Caracalla, met with in some inscriptions, has led to the conjecture that it was erected or repaired during the reign of that emperor, about the commencement of the third century. But, as the stones of this edifice furnish the same indications as those of the great temple, it has thence been concluded that it was

partly built with the materials of the latter, or that it was itself a reconstruction of a more ancient temple from its own ruins.

This temple, standing on rather lower ground, is an oblong square, with the entrance towards the east. Though it is not possible, either within or without, to follow the details, unless by passing over the immense quantities of rubbish, it is, nevertheless, in much better preservation than the other temple. The outer walls, which supported the roof, now fallen in, are still standing. Their height is about six fathoms. On their inner face, among other very rich ornaments, are to be seen several niches of exquisite workmanship, between which rise fluted pilasters of the Corinthian order, surmounted by an entablature, the frieze of which is a garland admirably sculptured. On the outside, in a line parallel with the walls, ran a peristyle or portico, nine feet wide. The roof, formed of concave stones, adorned with sculpture representing the gods or the heroes of paganism, was supported by a series of columns of the same order as the temple, about eight fathoms in height, and five feet in diameter. There were eight in front, and thirty on the flanks : no more than seventeen are now left.

Beneath the pavement, encumbered with the immense ruins of the temples, there is a subterraneous vault of the like extent. It is about thirty feet in height. The stones of which it is built are said to be not less surprising for their dimensions than those observed above. I had not time to inspect it.

History, which, by a remarkable disposition of Providence, is frequently silent respecting the origin of

families, of nations, and of their institutions, or which records only uncertain and obscure things concerning them, because in general what it would have to say would only serve to gratify a vain and sterile curiosity ; history, I say, never fails to mark their development, their transitory greatness, their fall, and their ruin : and God wills this, because there the pride of man finds grand, instructive, and awful lessons. While pausing to consider with some attention the incredible solidity of the walls, of the columns, of the vaults, in short, of the different parts still remaining of the sacred edifices of Balbeck, one is astonished that the entire monument is not yet standing, and one is tempted to believe that it was the hand of man, often more destructive than that of Time, which made the ruins spread out before one's eyes : but the fact is not so. It is true that, when christianity began to supersede, in Heliopolis, a worship not merely idolatrous but hideously obscene, Christians, fired with a holy zeal, did break in pieces the statues of the gods to whom the religion of the country made it a duty to sacrifice the chastity of virgins ; but the temple remained. It was purified and converted by the Emperor Theodosius into a church, and was used for the Christian worship till the moment when the country fell under the dominion of the Arabs. Twice has Coelo-Syria been since visited by earthquakes ; twice has the ground trembled beneath the ponderous masses of Balbeck ; and twice has the shock disjointed, dislocated, thrown down, the most elevated parts, and piled ruins upon ruins.\* It was not till then that the barbarous hand of man interfered.

\* During the earthquakes in 1202 and 1759.

Turkish avarice and cupidity fell foul of columns and arches, for the sake of the iron cramps which fastened them together; and, to obtain these, it set to work to mutilate the fragments.

I quitted the ruins with the last gleam of twilight, and I must confess that already I no longer felt in my soul that passionate admiration, the emotions of which had constantly agitated me during the long hours that I had spent in examining the temples; or that painful regret which had so keenly affected it at the sight of such a mighty destruction. It was wholly engrossed by other thoughts. What are become of the priests, the worship, the festivals, of Balbeck? All gone, all swept away! What has become of the gods? The gods! they did not last so long as their sanctuaries, as their images, fragments of which I may possibly have seen . . . . And I felt more deliciously the happiness which the Christian enjoys to know and to serve the true God, the great God, the God of gods, Him whose worship will not finish with ages, Him whose priests succeed each other from generation to generation; Him who shall never cease to have temples on earth, till the earth itself is dissolved, and to receive there the homage and adoration of his servants; till He shall have collected them all in the eternal temple of the heavens.

At midnight we were on the road to Damascus. Dissatisfied with the guides whom I had hired at Eden, I changed them at Balbeck. The new ones, like the others, led us out of the way. Travelling at random, we sometimes found ourselves upon heights without outlet, sometimes in impassable ravines; liable, every moment,

whether on horseback or on foot, to the most dangerous falls. Judge how long the night appeared to us in such a situation. At length, daylight appeared. We then discovered our error ; instead of turning to the right, we had been all the while keeping on to the left. Thanks be to Heaven, we had not met with any accident !

In going from Balbeck to Damascus, one is at first obliged to ascend bare, sterile mountains, whose dreary aspect and strange forms sadden the eye of the traveller : it is a real desert. Further on, in descending their rugged declivity, you discover by degrees some traces of vegetation. You soon perceive a narrow valley, divided longitudinally by a stream, which fertilizes its borders, and, parting into several branches, proceeds to water the plain of Damascus : this is the Barrada. As we advanced, the aspect of its banks became more and more pleasing. The poplars and the willows which shade them, the verdure by which they are carpeted, the charming spots that are discerned on the slopes of the rocks, covered here and there with shrubs, and even with large and healthy trees, a few villages advantageously placed on points not far distant, embellished the landscape and refreshed the eye.

We halted a few moments on the bank of the river to enjoy this agreeable prospect, to quench our thirst, and, screened from the sun, to recruit our strength, which the difficulty of the road and the excessive heat had nearly exhausted : but for this halt we could not have borne the fatigue of the journey. Unluckily, the Barrada in its windings runs so close to the mountains as in some places to wash their flanks ; to pass these the traveller

must either strike into the rugged paths among the rocks, or make up his mind to venture through the water, which is not without danger.

We arrived in the evening at a large village, the name of which I have forgotten. It is situated near the river. We stopped at a mill, on the roof of which we were obliged to pass the night. This roof, flat, like the roofs of all the houses in this country, was of wood, and in a bad state. No sooner was I upon it, than a board gave way beneath me, and my leg sunk through into the mill. In the night I was uneasy from the apprehension that, should such another accident occur, some of us might be thrown upon the wheels. Fortunately nothing of the sort happened. Very early next morning we resumed our journey, and hastened our march, that we might enter Damascus before night.

Of all the Mussulman cities, Damascus is the most intolerant and the most fanatic: it abhors every thing European—persons, religion, and even dress. Before the Egyptian troops made themselves masters of the place, it would not have suffered Christians to travel on horseback in its territory; the only animals they durst ride were asses, and from these they were obliged to alight on entering its walls. Even now, in spite of the yoke to which it is forced to submit, the protection which the conqueror grants to such of the inhabitants and travellers as are not professors of the religion of Mahomet is a subject of exasperation; and a stranger would expose himself not only to the insults of the populace, but to real dangers, were he to attempt to appear in any other dress than the Turkish. The Lazarist Fathers, and the



apostolic legate himself, wear the Turkish costume ; the Franciscans and the Capuchins alone, whose establishments have subsisted upwards of a century, still retain the religious habit, to which the people have at length become used.

Being apprized of the unfavourable dispositions of the Damasquins towards strangers, and fearing, too, that my Trappist robe might furnish occasion for blasphemies against our holy religion, I had taken the precaution to provide myself with Turkish garments. We were still more than two leagues from the city, when my people thought that it was time to attend to my toilet. We stopped for the purpose, under the trees of an orchard. Never was metamorphosis more speedy or more complete. Nothing could have agreed better with the disguise than my long beard. "Why," said those about me, "he looks exactly like a Mussulman ! Who could tell he was not one !" The Turk who performed the office of valet, being too short to be able to place the turban on my head, begged me by a sign to kneel down. "Kneel !" I desired my interpreter to say to him : — "a Christian never kneels but to his God. Let him get upon this log," I added, pointing to the trunk of a tree that lay near us, "and then he will be tall enough." He complied, grumbling.

We were just ready to start again, when a Turk, coming from Damascus, informed us that the cholera was making frightful havoc there, and that it was sweeping off at least two hundred persons a day. This intelligence surprised me the more, because, from all the information that I had hitherto received, I made sure that it

had entirely ceased. After a moment's reflexion, I determined to run all risks, and gave the signal for departure.

We found ourselves once more upon sterile mountains, and, by some fatality or other, our guides appeared embarrassed, as if incessantly seeking the way, and not knowing where we were. The heat was suffocating: my head, muffled up in the turban, was drenched with perspiration. Enveloped in a cloud of dust, tired of seeing nothing but rocks around me, I fancied in my impatience that we should never arrive. I conceived that we had utterly lost our way, when, at length, our men seemed to recognize the localities. They led us into a narrow gorge, assuring us that we were not far from the *Holy City*. Such is the name given by the Mahometans to Damascus, because it is the general rendezvous of their pilgrims coming from the north of Asia to visit Mecca. We took courage, and in a few minutes we reached the extremity of the defile.

All at once, the most extensive, the most beautiful, the most delightful prospect that I had ever beheld, presented itself to my view. My impatience ceased. I could not help stopping to contemplate and to admire it. My eye wandered over, and lost itself in the immensity of the magnificent landscape that lay before me: a plain, the extremities of which, on the south and east, towards the desert, are imperceptible in the distance beneath the azure of a boundless horizon; a forest of trees, of all kinds and of all sizes, some lifting up to the skies the dark and tufted foliage of their pyramids, others spreading themselves out into large parasols; lemon, orange, apricot-trees, displaying on all sides their golden fruit;

tall vines, clinging to the trunks and branches which they meet with, or running in vacant spaces along the supports which the hand of man has provided for them, and distinguishable by the delicate green of their foliage, which hangs in festoons; here and there kiosks, pavilions, country-houses, and, all around, gardens, pastures, in which sheep, horned cattle, horses, and camels, are grazing; in the dells, formed by the irregularities of the ground, shrubberies, gardens, fields, and habitations; the seven branches of the Barrada pouring along their streams, and vying, as it were, with the numerous brooks which shall in its course impart most beauty, freshness, and fertility, to the spots to which Nature or human industry has charged them to bear the tribute of their waters; lastly, in the centre of this enchanting landscape, Damascus, proudly displaying its ramparts, its towers, its battlements, the crescent on its mosques, its numberless minarets, and affording glimpses, at several points between the trees of the forest, of its humble dwellings, as well as its most magnificent structures, arranged like the steps of an amphitheatre.

It was five o'clock in the evening when we entered the city. The gate where, till of late, as I have told you, the Christian was obliged to alight, and where he was even subjected to the grossest extortions, was guarded only by a few men, whose countenances bespoke the dissatisfaction which they felt to see a stranger thus enter the *Holy City* on horseback. They allowed us to pass, eyeing us with sullen scowling looks.

At the time of my visit to Mount Lebanon, I had made the acquaintance of the abbé Tustet, a young Lazarist of

great merit, and received from him gratifying testimonies of kindness and friendship. I knew that he resided at Damascus, with the abbé Poussous, superior of the mission; and I determined to solicit hospitality of these two good Fathers. On seeing a Turk enter their court-yard, though they could easily perceive from the expression of my countenance that I lacked something of the Mussulman gravity, they were amazed : they knew not what to think. But, presently, M. Tustet recognized me; he threw himself into my arms, and I was received, welcomed, with all the charity of a disciple of Vincent de Paul, with all the politeness that does honour to the French character, and with all the cordiality of a friend who meets again with a friend.

I soon learned that what we had heard concerning the ravages of the cholera was absolutely false. The Turk, from what motive I know not, had told us lies, and I was right in believing that the scourge had ceased.

Next morning, early, I went to pay my respects to the Franciscan Fathers, and I was desirous to visit the places which the presence of St. Paul has rendered for ever celebrated. The abbé Tustet had the kindness to be my guide and interpreter.

The first house towards which we directed our course is situated near the east gate, "in the street which is called Straight." According to tradition, it is that mentioned in the ninth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which belonged to a Jew named Judas. St. Paul, struck with blindness, on his way to Damascus, was conducted thither by his companions after his conversion. There he was at prayer, when Ananias, a disciple of Jesus Christ, directed by a divine inspiration, went to inquire

for him, and laid his hands upon him and baptized him. In this house there is a kind of cell, or very small closet, where, it is said, the apostle passed three days, without sight, and without food. Here, too, it was, we are told, that he had the admirable vision in which he was rapt into the third heaven.

The Straight street (*via recta*) as St. Luke calls it, on occasion of the house of Judas, is still standing entire: it is the principal street of the city, running from one end of it to the other, from east to west. The buildings on either side are almost all shops or warehouses, stocked with the richest commodities, both of Europe and of the different parts of Asia, which are brought thither by the caravans of pilgrims. Dressed, almost all of them, in white, and with studied elegance, the head wrapped in a voluminous turban, which the Damasquin arranges more tastefully than any other Asiatic, the Turkish tradesmen, squatted on their heels before their shops, calmly wait till a customer comes to rouse them from their indolence. Nothing is more curious to the eye of the European, unused to the sight, than the contrast of that long file of black beards, with the white colour of the garments over which they descend.

From the house of Judas we went to another in the same street, about forty paces farther, where Ananias the disciple dwelt, and in which, if we may believe tradition, he was buried. Close at hand is a fountain, from which the water used for baptizing the apostle was brought. This house has been converted into a mosque: we could see only the outside of it.

We went out through the east gate, and when we were

beyond the walls, M. Tustet showed me the window, or kind of loophole, from which the Christians, being apprized that the Jews designed to kill St. Paul, and were besetting the gates night and day to prevent his escape, let him down the side of the wall in a basket.

On one of the stones in this wall, I remarked, with extreme surprise, a large fleur-de-lis in relievo. I have not been able to obtain any precise information concerning it.

The cavern where the apostle secreted himself when delivered from his enemies, is near the cemetery of the Christians, at a little distance from the city. It is so small that one can scarcely get into it.

The spot where St. Paul was suddenly surrounded by "a light from heaven," and where "he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" is more than three leagues from Damascus. My guide was perfectly willing to accompany me thither; but I was still too much fatigued with bad nights, and the heat and dust of my journey, to undertake so long an excursion.

After I had inspected these different places, the catholic churches were what I was most anxious to see. Alas! my friend, I could not pause a moment to consider what this populous city is become, in reference to religion, without sighs bursting from my heart, without tears of grief moistening my eyes. Of the large and magnificent churches which adorned the capital of Syria, formerly so Christian, nought is now left, save deplorable ruins. Those which time has spared have fallen a prey to the enemies of Christ, and, converted into mosques, they now

serve only for the absurd and impious worship established by Mahomet. The catholics have but the three Latin monasteries : that of the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Land, containing eight priests, all Spaniards ; that of the Capuchins, inhabited by a single monk—(the Father who now resides there practises medicine in the short intervals of leisure allowed him by apostolic labours, and has distinguished himself by the introduction of vaccination among a great number of the inhabitants) — and, lastly, the convent of the Lazarists, where I am receiving hospitality. This last house, the most interesting of the three, possesses a very handsome church, the building of which, under a fanatic and extortionate government, could be carried on but very slowly, and was attended with the greatest difficulties. It was erected by the abbé Poussous, superior of the mission, who unites to the higher virtues remarkable courage and extraordinary prudence : it cost him a great deal of money, trouble, and uneasiness. It would be too long to relate to you the disappointments, the vexations, and the obstacles which he encountered in the accomplishment of this work. You may form some idea of them when I tell you that the treachery of one of the masons had nearly been his ruin : he thought himself very fortunate to escape by paying a fine of twelve thousand piastres to the avaricious and fanatic pacha.

Having touched upon the Christian recollections awakened by Damascus, and the few religious establishments existing there, I shall now tell you briefly what I have been able to collect relative to its origin and past condition, and what I have observed of its present state.

Damascus is one of the most ancient cities in the world. The general belief is, that it was built by Hus, son of Aram, and grandson of Shem. Josephus, the historian, tells us so expressly. Hus called it Aram, after his father; it afterwards received the name of Damascus, from a slave of Abraham's, and steward of his household, who had enlarged and embellished it.

The word Damascus, in Hebrew Dammeseck, signifies, according to the interpreters, *sack of blood*. Some scholars, attaching themselves exclusively to this etymology, have pretended to explain it by an ancient tradition, stating, that it was very near the spot on which Damascus stands that Cain slew his brother Abel: but there is no evidence whatever of the alleged fact on which their opinion is founded.

Damascus was the capital of Syria and Phoenicia, till the time when Seleucus Nicanor, having caused Antioch to be built, made it the capital of his dominions, that is to say, till the year 301 before Christ. It had not ceased to be tributary to the Jews, till after the death of Solomon. Taken and destroyed several times by the kings of Assyria, it had been rebuilt, and become powerful, when it was taken by the army of Alexander, after his victories over Darius. At the time of the war between the Romans and Tigranes, Pompey sent against it two of his lieutenants, who made themselves masters of it. In the year of Christ, 636, it was taken by the Mussulmans commanded by Omar. The caliphs retained peaceful possession of it till the time of the crusades. Attacked by the Christians in 1148, it sustained several assaults, and at length triumphed over their efforts, in consequence



of the dissensions prevailing among their chiefs, or, as others allege, through treachery. In 1306, Tamerlane took it from the Saracens, laid it waste, and turned it into a cemetery. Sultan Selim made himself master of it in 1517, and left it to his successors. Ibrahim Pacha, son of the viceroy of Egypt, reduced it in July, 1832.

This city was formerly surrounded by triple walls, and defended by round or square towers, the ruins only of which remain. The new walls, built on the foundations of the ancient, are far less solid : they already show the ravages of time. They form an oblong square, the circuit of which is a league and a half. The gates are eighteen in number : the most ancient is that of St. Paul, Bab-Boulos, by which I entered.

Ancient Damascus, according to the sacred Scriptures, was watered by two rivers, the Abana and the Pharpar. (II. Kings, v. 12.) Some conjecture that the Abana is the Orontes ; others that it is the Chrysorroes of the Greeks, and the Barrada of the Mussulmans. Scholars of equal eminence think it right to apply the latter of these denominations to the Pharpar. Perhaps it may not be unreasonable to assume that the Pharpar and the Abana are but two branches of one and the same river. Leaving these opinions, on the truth of which it is not for me to decide, I shall observe that to the Barrada Damascus chiefly owes the beauty and fertility of its plain. It rises in Mount Lebanon. As I have already taken occasion to remark, it divides into seven branches : these are so many rivers, which irrigate the gardens outside the city, penetrate by means of various canals into those within the walls, supply the baths, which are very

numerous, the public fountains, the basins, the citadel; then, uniting again at a little distance from Damascus, flow on in a single stream for a few leagues, when it is lost in a large lake, called, by the Arabs, Behairat-el-Mardi, Sea of the Meadow.

The streets of the city, excepting those contiguous to the seraglio, are in general narrow, and the more filthy because most of them are ill-paved, or rather not paved at all: that in which the Franciscans live was nearly impassable. The good Fathers had it paved, at their own expence, with fine flag-stones. The pacha, being informed of it, had the generosity, remarkable in a Turk, not to order the work to be destroyed; he merely sentenced the convent to pay a fine of forty purses in expiation of this misdemeanor. After rain, in particular, the streets are in a deplorable state: you cannot stir a step without sinking into deep, thick mud; and you may conceive what a condition good clothes or a handsome cloak will be in, if you forget to hold them up.

The houses, built of wood or brick, and plastered with the mud that is used for mortar, have, like all those in Turkey, no windows outside. The door, very like the wicket of a prison, is so low that you are obliged to stoop painfully in order to enter. Every thing outside indicates poverty and wretchedness; but, no sooner have you crossed the threshold, than you find yourself transported, as if by enchantment, into a new world. Beyond a small and very dark corridor, you all at once have before you a magnificent court, paved with white marble, adorned with a basin likewise of marble, and crowned by a border of Arabian jasmines, orange, lemon, and

pomegranate-trees, and fragrant flowers. From the middle of the basin rises a jet-d'eau, which keeps up an agreeable coolness. On the sides are the chambers and the rooms appropriated to the reception of strangers. Sculptures, gilding, mirrors, splendid furniture, rare porcelain, clocks of the most beautiful forms, rich cushions and carpets, in short, the most elegant and exquisite productions with which the progress of the arts can furnish luxury, are there found collected with equal profusion and taste.

Beyond these brilliant apartments many houses have gardens abounding in vegetables, fruit, especially plums, apricots, and delicious grapes. The best sort of grape, I am assured, is that which comes from Dakaia, and the Turks very seriously account for its superior excellence in this manner:—"Mahomet," they say, "was one day playing at chess with God, when he was thirsty and asked for some grapes to refresh him. At the moment when he was laying hold of a grape, some of the stones dropped from his fingers, and, being then precisely over the village of Dakaia, they fell upon a soil which heaven seemed to have prepared for the purpose. The stones, disengaged from their envelope, sprouted, and in time produced the wonderful stock that yields the most exquisite grapes of Damascus." At the distance at which you are, laugh as heartily as you please at this admirable explanation; but I would advise you to beware of doing so here in the presence of *true believers*: you would pay rather dearly for your irreverence.

The various houses which I have visited, and the

magnificence of which I have had occasion to remark, belong to Christians possessing fortunes of not more than a hundred thousand crowns. Those of the Turks, who are more wealthy, far surpass them in grandeur and beauty. To these I could not obtain an introduction: excepting extraordinary cases, none but Mussulmans are admitted into them.

The most considerable of the private buildings are the palaces of the agas. The citadel is a fortress, the extent of which exhibits the appearance of a second town. Its walls are out of repair. The five towers which defend it, though very ancient, are in good condition: the stones are remarkable for being cut facet-wise.

The bazars and the khans of Damascus are very numerous, and most of them very handsome. Some of them are exclusively appropriated to a particular branch of industry or commerce; but, in all of them you find in store, or on sale, not only the productions of the country, but also the most costly stuffs of India, and almost all the commodities of Europe. The new bazars are the most magnificent: they are of the most elegant construction, and lighted by dormer-windows. That which appeared to me the most extensive, and the most striking of these edifices, is the khan of Assad Pacha: it reminded me, by its external form, of the Halle-au-Blé at Paris.

Of all the edifices, those most worthy of attention, both for their number and their architecture, are the mosques. They amount to, at least, two hundred; some of which are very handsome. But wo to the profane wight who should dare to approach one! still greater wo if he presumes to enter! he would atone with his life for the crime

of having polluted it by his presence. Whoever is not a Mussulman must not look at it but from a distance. The most remarkable is the mosque which bore the name of St. John Baptist, when it was a Christian church. According to the Damasquins, the head of the saint is still preserved there in a gold dish. There, too, they say, he is buried. The head, according to them, is now shut up in a grotto within the mosque ; and if it is never shown to any one, it is only from a feeling of profound respect.

Till the commencement of the present century, nothing was known concerning the interior of this mosque. The accounts of travellers had stated that it was of Corinthian architecture, surmounted by several domes, the principal of which was called dome of Aliat, and that at the entrance there was a spacious court, surrounded by a piazza. Some pretended that they had been so bold as to observe it from without, on days when the great doors were opened, and asserted that they had seen several columns supporting the vault, and numerous gilt ornaments. In 1803, the Spaniard Badia y Leblich, since so celebrated by the name of Ali Bey, a man profoundly versed in the Arabic language, and thoroughly acquainted with Mussulman usages, set out for the East, charged with a secret mission by Charles IV., and succeeded in passing himself off for a descendant of the Abassides sovereigns. By means of this falsehood, he lulled all suspicion, and was everywhere received with marked distinction. He visited the Mahometan temples, studied in detail the least known points of the religious worship, and, on his return to Europe, published his travels. He had seen the great mosque at Damascus. According to him, it is divided

into three parts, four hundred feet long, the arches of which rest on forty-four columns in each row ; in the centre, the edifice is surmounted by an immense cupola, supported by four prodigious pillars. At the farther end are two small low galleries, with large korans for the readers ; and above, the choir for the chanter. The floor is covered with the most beautiful carpets. On the left of the centre partition, or nave, is a small wooden lodge, with mouldings and ornaments of gold, and arabesque paintings : this is the tomb of John Baptist.

Damascus is every year the rendezvous of the pilgrims from the north of Asia, who there form themselves into caravans to travel to Mecca. They amount sometimes to thirty or forty thousand. Most of them bring with them commodities, which they sell or exchange for those of other countries ; hence, for some time before the general departure, there is a bustle, an extraordinary activity, of which our most celebrated fairs in Europe can scarcely convey an idea. The greater part lodge at the great khan, an immense and magnificent edifice, before which there is a spacious court, paved with marble, and in external appearance resembling a monastery. Christians are forbidden to enter it. Formerly, when the caravans set out, they were always headed by the pacha of Damascus, who assumed the title of conductor of the sacred caravan, or emir hadjee, prince pilgrim. Now-a-days a much less exalted personage is frequently its leader.

The population of the city amounts to about one hundred and forty thousand souls, among whom it is computed that there are fifteen thousand catholics or Ma-

ronites, five or six thousand schismatic Greeks, and two thousand Jews, who have three synagogues.

The people of Damascus are accounted the most malignant, the most fanatic, and the most intolerant in the Turkish empire. This disposition of mind is attributed to their intercourse with the pilgrims. It was not without extreme vexation that they saw the late revolution effected by Ibrahim. When the pacha appeared before the city, all rushed forth furiously to meet him, armed to the teeth, with sleeves tucked up, setting up horrid yells, talking of nothing but vengeance and cutting off heads, and sharing the booty among them beforehand: you would have thought that they were going to destroy all before them. The first cannon-shot fired at them put them to the rout: they fled with such precipitation, that, unable to get into the city all at once, they stifled one another at the gates. Their rage is still far from appeased. What most irritates them against Ibrahim, is the equal protection which he grants to the Christians. Happy the latter, to be able to breathe a little more freely, after having been so long under the iron sceptre of their oppressors! But how much is it to be feared that they will some day atone in a cruel manner for the joy which they but too strongly manifested at their deliverance! Some of them, in the transports of their intoxication, went so far as to mimic in public masquerades the departure of the Turkish pilgrims for Mecca. Should the Egyptians not retain their conquest, this indiscretion will be fatal to the Christians: it will cost them tears of blood. God help them in their tribulation!

In telling you about my entry into Damascus, and the

Turkish dress which I was obliged to assume, I said that no stranger is seen here attired in the European fashion : I was wrong ; I have at last seen one such. He is an Englishman, who distributes Protestant bibles, whether people will have them or not, and who even pays them to buy the books of him.

Farewell, my dear Charles. In two days I shall return to Beyrout, where I intend to embark for the island of Cyprus, and thence proceed to Egypt. I did purpose, first, to have gone to the ruins of Palmyra ; but the execution of this plan, which I had much at heart, depended not on myself : I have met with invincible obstacles. Ibrahim Pacha, having cut off the heads of some of the sheiks of the Maouli tribes, bordering upon those celebrated ruins, there is none who will at this moment undertake to conduct strangers thither. A sheik, who in general accompanies them, sent me word that he would not engage to take me for thirty thousand piastres. The Bedouins are so exasperated that they breathe nothing but blood and vengeance.

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## LETTER XLV.

DEPARTURE FROM DAMASCUS — ACCIDENT IN THE VALLEY OF THE BEKAA — RETURN TO BEYROUT — EMBARKATION FOR CYPRUS — LARNACA — M. DE BOUTENIEFF — DEPARTURE FROM CYPRUS — LIMASSOL — COAST OF EGYPT — FORT OF ALEXANDRIA — VIEW OF THE CITY — CHEVALIER ACERBI, CONSUL-GENERAL OF AUSTRIA — MONASTERY OF ST. CATHERINE — POMPEY'S PILLAR — CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLES — HISTORY OF ALEXANDRIA — ASSES — ENVIRONS — HARBOUR — WRECK — MEHEMET ALI — AUDIENCE — BOGOS-JOUSSOUF — FIRMAN OF THE VICEROY, AND LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION TO THE GOVERNOR OF CAIRO.

Alexandria, December 18, 1832.

On the 7th of October, I quitted Damascus, leaving, with regret, the two French priests, from whom I had



received such kind hospitality. To me they were friends — brothers ; never shall I forget them.

In order to return to Beyrout, I was obliged to take the road which I had already travelled. On reaching the defile, where, with such agreeable surprise, I had beheld for the first time the capital of Syria, I halted to contemplate, to admire, it once more, and to bid it a last farewell.

The journey took us four long days ; and the difficulty of the roads across the mountains, and the excessive heat, rendered it extremely arduous. In the valley of the Bekaa, I had like to have lost my baggage : through the awkwardness of my moucro, the ass which carried it fell and sunk in the mud of a morass. Nothing but the head of the poor beast was to be seen. Had he not possessed great strength, he must have perished.

To add to my trouble, the moucro, instead of exerting himself to extricate the animal, was insolent and ill-tempered. I might think myself fortunate, he said, that he had not seen me before he undertook to conduct us. Had he known that I was so rich and so important a personage, he would not have engaged himself for less than four hundred piastres. These murmurs continued for great part of the way. He did not hold his tongue till I declared that, if my religious profession forbade me to give him a lesson myself, for the benefit of other travellers, I would on my arrival acquaint the Austrian consul with his behaviour, and he would cause him to be punished as he deserved.

I hoped to meet M. Lamartine again at Beyrout, but was disappointed : he had set out for Jerusalem.

On the tenth, I embarked for Cyprus, on-board the Austrian vessel, the *Pianura*; after pressing to my heart the kind, the amiable consul, M. Laurella, who, as well as his interesting family, had, during my stay, loaded me with civilities.

At leaving these parts, which I shall never see again, I felt a pang which I cannot express. Jerusalem, the Via dolorosa, Calvary, the tomb of my Saviour, Bethlehem, Nazareth, their sacred grottoes, all the holy places which I had had the happiness to visit, presented themselves to my imagination. The recollection of them powerfully moved my heart. Plunged into a religious sadness, I could no longer repress my tears and my sighs.

The wind was favourable: in a few hours we lost sight of the coast of Syria. On the following day we anchored at Larnaca. I again beheld that monastery, where, in the preceding year, I had received such a touching welcome; that chamber, in which I had been struck with paralysis; that garden, which was so delightful in the days of my convalescence. I again met the excellent M. Caprara, the consul of Austria, and all the friends who had shown me such cordial and constant kindness.

Anxious to proceed as speedily as possible to Egypt, where I purposed to pass the winter, I waited impatiently for a vessel to convey me to Alexandria. M. de Boutenieff, brother of the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, a distinguished naval officer, who lost an arm at Navarin, most obligingly offered to take me. He commands a brig of war, which was on the point of sailing; but he was to touch at several ports of Syria,

and to stop there. This consideration decided me. I declined his offer with thanks, hoping that I should meet with some vessel that would carry me more speedily to my destination. I was disappointed: M. de Boutenieff arrived three weeks before me.

At length, on the 19th of November, I embarked on board the French brig, *Eglé et Melanie*, captain Terras. The weather was dreadful, the wind contrary. We were obliged to put into Limassol, the Amathonte of the ancients, a small town, situated at the extremity of the island, and which has a good road. We found there several vessels, which, like ourselves, had run in for shelter.

To amuse myself during this delay, I frequently went to walk about on shore. I liked to survey the vessels lying at anchor, and to watch the movements of the numerous boats, carrying on board the various productions of the island, destined principally to be conveyed to the ports of Syria. As the weather still continued foul, our captain, who is an excellent seaman, and whose ship, new and copper-bottomed, had nothing to fear from the gale, determined to weigh anchor. Propelled by the tempest, on the third day after our departure, we descried the whitish, low, and winding coast of Egypt. Soon afterwards we could distinguish Alexandria through a forest of masts, majestically overtopped by those of several three-deckers, one of which carried one hundred and forty guns.

At four in the afternoon we approached the harbour. The entrance is dangerous; it would be imprudent to attempt it without a pilot. Fortunately, the wind abated

a little, and allowed us at six o'clock to come to an anchor. Our vessel was presently surrounded by the various boats belonging to the department of health, the post-office, and the consuls. They inquired from what places we came, and what news we brought. I was apprehensive of a quarantine ; but we were assured that in less than twenty-four hours we should have permission to land.

Next morning, at day-break, I was up, surveying that city, which, at the command of the extraordinary man to whom it is now subject, seems to have acquired a new existence, a new life. By the help of a glass, I could perceive in detail the extreme activity prevailing in the harbour, in the dock-yard, and around that colossus, that 140-gun ship, which is not yet finished. The captain, who was at my elbow, pointed out and obligingly explained to me the objects most worthy of my curiosity. We had before us the palace of the viceroy ; that of his son, Ibrahim ; the arsenal and the storehouses, magnificent buildings, whose construction surprises the more, because it was executed by Arab architects, and in a very short time ; the quarter of the Franks, almost all the houses of which are built in the European style, and have several stories ; beyond that, on an eminence, a handsome village and neat habitations ; here and there, groves of palm-trees ; and, in the distance, that famous pillar, which, in spite of the discoveries of modern science, is still called Pompey's, lifting its lofty top into the air, and serving as a land-mark to ships more than two leagues out at sea.

The promised permission having been brought to us

the same day, I went ashore in the consular boat, which M. Acerbi, consul-general of Austria, had kindly sent with his secretary and a janissary to fetch me. I knew him by reputation, and had previously had some correspondence with him. The chevalier Acerbi is an amiable scholar, and a man of the most polished manners. Possessing a magnificent library, and a most beautiful cabinet of natural history, he devotes to the arts and sciences every moment of leisure left him by the duties of his office. He did me the honour to offer me his table, and an apartment at the Consulate. A wish to enjoy more freedom in my religious exercises, and more especially the fear of being indiscreet, caused me to decline both.

I proceeded to the monastery of St. Catherine, belonging to the Franciscan Fathers. It was the 25th of November, precisely the festival of the saint. I arrived in time to attend the service, which was performed with the more pomp because the illustrious virgin, the patroness of the convent, was a native of Alexandria, and had there suffered martyrdom. I was surprised at the number of the congregation, and was told that the persons whom I had seen were not a sixth part of the catholics dwelling in the city. It is computed that they amount at present to at least twelve thousand, among whom are many Maltese.

On the following day I hastened to take a near view of the famous pillar, which had so forcibly struck me the day before our landing. It stands outside the walls, to the south, on an arid and desert eminence. Its base is a square of about fifteen feet each way; the shaft, of

a single piece, is ninety feet high, and nine in diameter ; the capital, which surmounts it, is of the Corinthian order, and ten feet high ; so that the total height of the column is one hundred and fifteen feet.

We find in the ancient historians nothing that furnishes a clue to the date and the real object of this monument. The appellation given to it by the moderns, and which it still bears, is not justified by any solid reason. Some have assigned its erection to the time of Ptolemy Evergetes ; others, supporting themselves upon the authority of Abulfeda, a celebrated Arabian writer, have asserted that it was erected by the Alexandrians, in honour of the emperor Septimus Severus, out of gratitude for favours which he had conferred on them. An inscription discovered in 1801, by three English officers, colonels Leake, Squire, and Hamilton, put an end to all uncertainty. It is as follows : —

“ Posidius, prefect of Egypt, erected this pillar in honour of the most magnanimous emperor Diocletian, the tutelar god of Alexandria.”

From Pompey's pillar, I directed my course towards the east side of the new harbour, to inspect Cleopatra's Needles, obelisks of granite, so called after the last scion of the race of Ptolemy, of that queen who has filled the world still more with the renown of her vices than with that of her beauty. One of these obelisks is yet standing on its base ; the other is thrown down, and partly buried in the ground : both are of a single stone, and covered with hieroglyphics. Pliny relates that they were cut by command of king Mespheus, and he gives them a height of forty-two cubits. About the commencement of the

eighteenth century, the French consul at Cairo, having obtained permission to measure them, found that their height, including the part of the base buried in the ground, was sixty-three feet; that is precisely the same as Pliny assigns to them, and this fact has been more than once confirmed by subsequent travellers.

But what is the date of these obelisks? who was this king Mespheus? This is what I have not been able to learn from men conversant in the science of history. Were not these Needles at Alexandria, as well as in other places, merely ornaments? or did they, originally as well as in later times, serve by their shadows to mark the seasons and the hours? or, if they were destined to commemorate the glory of high personages, of kings and queens, with what part of the life of Cleopatra is the erection of them connected? On all these points I have yet met with nothing but suppositions and conjectures.

Some years since, the viceroy made a present to the king of England of the obelisk which is thrown down, and he carried his liberality so far as to take upon himself the expence of transport. Such an offer could not but be accepted. An engineer was sent from England to take measures for removing the colossus, but it appears that he despaired of succeeding; at any rate, there the obelisk lies to this day. Sir Robert Wilson says, in his "History of the Expedition of the British Army in Egypt, in 1801 and 1802," that lord Cavan, governor of Alexandria, caused an attempt to be made for the same purpose, but again without success. What could they have done then with the obelisk of Luxor, which the French, however, have carried off like a feather!

You will, no doubt, deem it a very rational curiosity which caused me to wish to make myself acquainted, in the first place, with the monuments which I have just mentioned. These, with the port, may be said to be the only ones capable of conveying a notion of what the city must have been in its splendour.

Alexandria was founded in the year 331 before Christ, by Alexander the Great, on the site of a village called Rachotis, near the sea, at the western mouth of the Nile. After fixing its extent, which was to be ninety-six stadia in circuit, the prince himself prepared the plan of it, and committed its execution to Dinocrates, a celebrated architect, the same who had rebuilt the temple of Ephesus, after it was burned by Erostratus—ports, fountains, canals, aqueducts, cisterns, private houses, baths, squares, theatres, public places for games, palaces, temples—nothing was omitted that could make it one of the first cities in the world for magnitude, the facility of communication with foreign countries, the conveniences of life, and magnificence. Divided into four quarters by two principal streets, one hundred feet wide, which intersected one another; it had in the centre a square much larger than any of the rest, and from which there was a distant view of both harbours. In order to people it the more expeditiously, Alexander attracted thither, by the grant of various privileges, not only his Macedonian subjects, but a considerable number of Jews, and people of all nations.

After his death, Alexandria became the capital of Egypt, and the residence of the Lagidian Ptolemies, who reigned there for nearly three centuries. Under their



rule it was enlarged, and attained the highest importance, not only by the prodigious commerce of which it was the centre, but by the protection invariably extended there to learning and to the arts and sciences.

Ptolemy Soter, the first of these princes, founded a sort of academy, by the name of Museon, which has served as a pattern for all the learned societies since formed. He assigned to it a library, which his successors enriched with all the rare and curious books a knowledge of which reached Egypt, so that the number of the volumes at length amounted to seven hundred thousand. To these benefits, Ptolemy Philadelphus added the establishment of new schools; he caused the sacred books of the Hebrews to be translated into the Greek language; he employed a skilful architect to build the famous tower of Pharos, as a guide to ships at sea, and which, in subsequent times, gave its name to the light-houses erected for the same purpose. This structure considered as one of the wonders of the world, rose from a rock on the island to the height of one hundred feet. Its summit commanded a view of forty leagues; it was of white stone, and consisted of several stories, surrounded by galleries, supported by marble pillars.

Pharos was then about seven hundred fathoms from the city, and this space was water. In the sequel it was joined to the continent, by means of a dyke of seven stadia, thence called Heptastadia, and which was gradually enlarged by the successive accumulations of mould between the two harbours.

In the year 47 before Christ, the Alexandrians having refused to acknowledge Julius Cæsar as guardian of

young Ptolemy, and umpire between that prince and his sister Cleopatra, who both claimed the throne of their father, the Roman general revenged their resistance with fire and sword, and, after a sanguinary struggle, made himself master of their city. The shipping was set on fire, and the flames, communicating to the quarter called Bruchion, in which were the royal palace and the library, consumed four hundred thousand volumes.

Seventeen years afterwards, Octavius Cæsar, being at war with Antony, passed over to Egypt, marched against his rival, then master of Alexandria, defeated him in a last battle, favoured by the treachery of Cleopatra, entered the city as conqueror, seized the immense wealth of the kings, but forbade his soldiers to plunder private houses, and pardoned the inhabitants, satisfied with having added another province to the Roman dominions.

At the commencement of the Christian era, Alexandria, under the sway of the emperors, more flourishing than under its own kings, had become the second city in the world, or, indeed, the first in point of commerce. It had not only increased from the influx of its neighbours, but it numbered among its inhabitants Bactrians, Scythians, Persians, whom interests of trade had induced to settle there. Its population amounted to at least seven hundred thousand persons. Each brought thither the creed and the religious worship of his country, so that it exhibited a monstrous medley of the most hideous superstitions.

In the year 60 of Jesus Christ, St. Mark, sent as bishop by the apostle St. Peter, carried thither the light of the gospel, and by his preaching founded there the

first and most celebrated of the patriarchal churches. With this church there was soon established a Christian school, against which the greatest geniuses of the idolatrous world struggled in vain. A Panthenes, a Clemens of Alexandria, an Origen, and a multitude of great men in their train, eclipsed the glory of the Pagan school by their erudition as well as by their virtues, and left their adversaries no other means of combating them but persecution and martyrdom.

The prosperity of Alexandria was subsequently balanced by cruel reverses. Besieged, taken, laid waste, during the reigns of Claudius, Aurelian, and Diocletian, it passed, in the beginning of the seventh century, from the dominion of Rome under that of the Persians, from whom it was taken in 642, by Amrou, general of the caliph Omar, after it had undergone all the calamities incident to a long siege and an obstinate defence. Amrou, at the solicitation of a philosopher of the time, called John the Grammarian, would gladly have saved that part of the library which had escaped the flames in the wars of Julius Cæsar, and that which the Ptolemies had since formed at a great expence. He durst not venture to grant this favour without consulting the caliph. "If," replied the barbarian, "those books contain nothing but what is in the Koran, they are useless; if they contain what is not there, they are dangerous: they must be destroyed." Upon this answer, the best works on the arts, sciences, philosophy, history, that the genius of man had till then produced, were doomed, without distinction, to the flames. The books were sent by thousands to the ovens and to the public baths, which they served to heat for six months.

At the time of this invasion by Omar, the population was still immense. The Jews alone amounted to more than forty thousand, paying tribute. Besides private houses, there were four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, and four hundred squares. With the Mussulman sway commenced the decline of Alexandria. The monuments of the arts, the public buildings, the establishments which had constituted the glory of that capital, the very walls and towers which encompassed it, gradually fell to ruin: every thing went to decay, every thing perished. Before a few centuries had elapsed, it became difficult to determine the position of places; and it was easy to foresee that the time was coming, when there would be nothing whereby to recognize them but the aid of science or the vestiges of ruins. At the present day, it is only by means of the accurate descriptions left us by the ancients, that we can assign, at least approximately, the sites where once stood the theatre, the museum, the stadium, the gymnasium, the temple of Serapis, the hippodrome, &c. With the exception of a few pieces of walls, a few towers, two obelisks, Pompey's pillar, and a very small number of other columns, either whole or broken, barbarism and time have destroyed every thing. The Alexandria of the Mussulmans is not the same, even in its site, as that of the Ptolemies. Contracted into a smaller compass, its population decreased from age to age; and the flourishing state which, according to some Arabian writers, it enjoyed in the fourteenth century, exhibits but a shadow of its ancient prosperity.

It would lead me too far, were I to enter into the details of the revolutions and disasters which it has

undergone since the time of the Crusades. Besieged, taken, and pillaged several times during that interval, it was at length reduced to a population in general poor, wretched, and less numerous than that of most of our small towns in Europe; and, with the exception of some commerce, destitute of any sort of interest but that derived from its past history and splendour.

In 1798, the French, led by Bonaparte, appeared before its walls, and took it by assault. Restored to Turkey in 1801, it continued to decline. Since it became the possession of Mehemet Ali, it seems to be rising again from its ashes; its population is on the increase, and it is assuming a more cheerful aspect. Trade, shipping, military art, architecture, public buildings, private habitations — all exhibit signs of new life. The immense concourse of native and foreign workmen, in every branch of industry, is not sufficient to satisfy the impatient genius which has communicated this extraordinary movement. You would say that he would fain, like God, create all things with a word.

The European who now visits Alexandria, without knowing any thing about it but what he has derived from the older travellers, or even those who wrote twenty years ago, would believe that he was in some other city, if Diocletian's Column and Cleopatra's Needles were not there to apprise him of his error, so great is the change, so prodigious the metamorphosis.

Still, at the sight of most of the streets, narrow, crooked, unpaved, and filthy, of the greater number of houses or rather huts, ill-built, inconvenient, and without windows outside, of whole quarters still in ruins, peopled

solely by paupers and mendicants, you feel that many years, perhaps ages, must elapse before Alexandria assumes the regular aspect of our commercial towns or sea-ports. In its present state, it exhibits the most extraordinary, nay, even the most hideous, contrasts: it is a confused assemblage of palaces and cabins, a mixture of luxury and poverty, of indolence and activity, of Turkish habits and European manners, which astonish the foreigner. Here, you are amidst bustle, the din of business or of pleasure; there, all is the silence and solitude of the desert. A man superbly dressed, covered with shawls of great value, walks by the side of a naked wretch; an English chariot, drawn by four magnificent horses, with footmen in laced liveries, is crossing a file of camels driven by squalid Arabs; European ladies, perfumed, in the most elegant costume, are tripping along by those hideous figures, barefooted, without any other garment than a chemise of blue cloth that is falling to rags, without any other veil than a piece of dirty linen, with which they keep nose and mouth constantly covered, and which leaves nothing exposed but two dull eyes that tell of distress and want; Europeans seated at a sumptuous banquet, singing about liberty—while, at the moment, men are driven along under their windows with sticks—and boys, twelve years old, are dragged with chains about their necks to be made soldiers and sailors against their will; intelligent workmen, under the direction of a skilful architect, erecting monuments which attest and do honour to the progress of the arts; while others are rummaging in the ground, breaking up capitals

and shafts of columns, and statues which time has spared, to furnish rough materials for new edifices.

One thing, which appears to me worthy of remark, because I have not met with it elsewhere, is, that at the corner of every street you find asses, well-caparisoned, which boys eagerly offer to those who wish to inspect the city, or to go from one quarter to another, and whom they follow on the run without ever flagging. There are few streets frequented for the sake of trade, in which you do not meet with these animals going and coming almost incessantly : they are the hackney-coaches and the cabriolets of the country.

You will perhaps be surprised that I have not yet told you whether, in a city where Christianity so long flourished, where so many illustrious bishops resided, where so many councils were held, where the number of believers was so considerable, I have been fortunate enough to discover any traces of the magnificent churches in which the mysteries of our faith were celebrated. Alas ! with the exception of the church of St. Mark, which looks like a ruin, and that of St. Catherine, belonging to the monastery where I dwell, all have disappeared.

As for the mosques, they are numerous, but there is nothing remarkable about them. That which chiefly attracts the notice of the Christian traveller, is the mosque of the Seventy ; so called because it is built, if we may believe tradition, on the very spot where the seventy interpreters, sent to Ptolemy by Eleazar the high-priest, made their translation of the sacred Scriptures.

The environs of Alexandria are dull and barren. After rain, the ground is nothing but mud ; in fine weather, it is a dust which the least breeze raises in clouds, and which is very annoying to the eyes. There is no verdure whatever, unless it be that of a few palm-trees, to enjoy whose shade you must toil through the loose sands.

Towards the harbours, the coast is low, full of shoals and reefs, which render it very dangerous. Not a year passes in which there is not reason to regret that a new light-house has not supplied the place of the wonderful pharos, which gave warning to navigators. In the space of eight days, I have seen an English vessel, laden with coal, aground upon a sand-bank, and another, still more unfortunate, actually wrecked. The latter was the Austrian ship, *Minos*. Captain Crelich, her commander, had been so lucky as to make the trip from Trieste to Alexandria in nine days ; and he conceived that he was approaching the term of his voyage, when his vessel struck upon a rock in the harbour.

Among the passengers on board her was M. Schiff, a young man, who had but just been married at Trieste, and who was taking his bride to Alexandria, anxious to introduce her to relatives and friends in that city. Scarcely had the young couple greeted each other with the fond appellations of husband and wife, when they saw themselves in danger of being swallowed up by the same wave. The vessel was shattered ; she had lost her rudder, and was gradually sinking, when a bold pilot, at the risk of his life, hastened to her assistance, and, by dint of courage and skill, rescued all on board



from the jaws of death. Soon afterwards the wreck was cast upon the beach.

The day after this disastrous accident, in spite of a violent storm, I rode with M. de Babich, chief dragoman of the Austrian consulate, to look at the wreck. Such sights are painful, to be sure ; but how eloquently do they proclaim to us that our days, our months, our years, are hurrying away, after piling themselves upon one another, like clouds, like billows, and that in a few moments more all will be over ! On my way from Beyrout to Mount Lebanon, as I have already told you, I saw seven or eight ships which had likewise fallen victims to the treacherous element, and the sight had made a deep impression upon me. But those were the relics of wrecks which had happened several months before, and imagination alone could picture to me their attendant horrors : here I should behold the sad reality. The weather, as I have said, was dreadful : the wind, rain, and hail, beat all at once in our faces. To the roaring of the tempest was added that of the raging sea. The ship lay near the catacombs, that is, the sepulchral caverns of the ancient Necropolis, the city of the dead.

On approaching the shore, we perceived soldiers posted at a certain distance from one another, to prevent the Arabs from stealing the things cast on shore by the waves — a precaution unfortunately needful, but extremely humiliating for humanity ! At length, on reaching the beach, we saw the vessel lying on her side, and her masts half destroyed. The furious waves, black, marbled with white foam, dashed confusedly around her : billows, lashed by the violence of the gale, rushed

roaring one after another, and at times entirely covered the wreck, falling far around in a shower of spray. A few paces off lay wearing apparel, linen, furniture, cordage, chests, and many other articles, damaged or broken to pieces. I particularly noticed the relics of a magnificent mahogany piano, belonging to M. Schiff. The sight of that instrument served to render the sad spectacle before me still sadder.

Notwithstanding the unfavourable weather, the concourse was great. It consisted of persons in the employ of the Austrian consulate, who had hastened to the spot, either to guard or to assist in saving what might otherwise have been lost; camel-drivers, loading their camels with effects or goods in bales; seamen, in vain seeking among these ruins the few articles belonging to themselves; and lastly, a multitude of curious spectators, dolefully eyeing this scene of desolation. The captain, pale, dejected, motionless as a statue, kept himself aloof. A circumstance which I could not help remarking with extreme surprise was, that though the Arabs are in the constant habit of bawling, yet among the great number of them present there prevailed a silence as profound as among the other spectators, who were struck dumb by consternation and stupor. In this silence, produced by a great misfortune, there was something extremely sombre and painful.

Mehemet Ali had been apprized, in the first days, of my arrival. I knew that he had spoken of me; I deemed it proper and advantageous to my interests to pay him a visit, especially as I could not prosecute my long journey in his dominions without obtaining a firman, and

letters of recommendation for the governors of the provinces, and of Cairo in particular.

Mehemet's is one of those vast but restless and turbulent minds, which Massillon alludes to, "one of those minds capable of enduring any thing but repose, which are incessantly turning round the pivot that fixes them, and would rather pull down the building and bury themselves in its ruins than not be doing something, than not be exerting their talents and their strength." The important part which he is now playing on the political stage in the East persuades me that, before you read the particulars of the audience to which I was admitted, you will not be displeased to find here an extract from an account of that extraordinary man, recently published :—

"Mehemet or Mohamet-Ali Pacha was born in the year of the Hegira 1182 (1769), at La Cavalla, a town of Rumelia, where his father was an officer of the governor's troops. Though his education was completely neglected, he early manifested an acute and penetrating mind, an active imagination, and an enterprizing disposition, which seemed at that time to presage the high destinies to which he has since been called.

"In his youth he had occasion to furnish a proof of his courage and prudence, in bringing back to their duty the inhabitants of a village who had revolted against the authorities of La Cavalla ; and this action won him the confidence of his superiors.

"A particular circumstance placed him at the head of a corps of three hundred men, which the district of La Cavalla sent to Egypt, by command of the Grand

Signor, against the French, who had invaded that country. No sooner had he joined the Ottoman army with his troops, than he attracted notice by the intrepidity of his conduct ; and he constantly distinguished himself in the different battles that it fought with the republican armies. After passing through all the ranks, and experiencing all the vicissitudes of the military profession, alternately censured and rewarded by his superiors, he was elected governor of Egypt by a deputation of sheiks, on the 14th of March, 1805. The country was then rent by intestine divisions, kept up by a multitude of tyrants known by the name of Beys, or Mamelukes. He resisted them ; and, two months after his election, on the 9th of July, 1805, he was confirmed by the Porte in his post of Pacha of Egypt.

“ The defeat of the English, at Rosetta, at the time of the disastrous expedition which they attempted in 1807 ; their expulsion from Egypt ; the destruction of the Mamelukes ; the wars with the Wahabees ; and the conquest of the Hedjaz, Cordofan, and Sennaar, subsequently raised him to the very highest place in the favour and esteem of the Sultan. Unfortunately, Mehemet Ali has persuaded himself that he has conquered Egypt by his sword, and he is bent on retaining possession of it and transmitting it to his heirs : in short, he is determined to found a new dynasty. He combines with great courage the art of commanding. He is endued with a subtile understanding and uncommon penetration. Hence he is acquainted with all the springs of politics, and can move them with skill. He sticks closely to business, and has such perseverance as enabled him to learn to read and

write at the age of forty-two. Throughout his whole conduct is seen the restless application of an ambitious man, who is determined to gain a name, no matter at what price. Parsimonious from natural disposition, and prodigal from caprice, he gives only out of ostentation : hurried away by violence, he is, nevertheless, not destitute of a certain feeling of humanity. He has taken from the *grande*s the horrible privilege of putting any one to death without trial ; he has attached to his cause a great number of the Porte's rebel subjects : he treats them honourably, and never would give them up ; lastly, during the insurrection of the Greeks, he took under his protection the Hellenes who were in Egypt, retaining them in their employments, and conferred on them new favours. His demeanour is affable, easy, and prepossessing. Free from prejudice, he can appreciate the European nations, affects to imitate them, and daily censures the *grande*s of his court for undervaluing them. Ever restless, he sleeps little, and seldom soundly. It is said that he is haunted by the slaughter of the Mamelukes. During the night, two females sit up in turn by his side, to replace the bed-clothes which he is incessantly deranging in his sleep. With his intimates, Mehemet is communicative, inquisitive, and for ever asking questions. His countenance is cheerful and open, and his eye full of fire."

Such is the man whom I was going to see. The chevalier Acerbi, consul-general of Austria, having inquired on what day I might be presented, was informed that his Highness would receive me on the 12th, at four in the afternoon.

We were punctual to the specified hour. We were accompanied by the dragoman and the janissaries of the consulate. I wore the habit of my order, having at my waist my wooden cross, surmounted with a death's head, and my rosary.

The pacha's palace is situated on the little peninsula formed by the ancient Pharos, since it has been joined to the continent. Near it are the offices of state and the barracks ; on the left, is a very large building called the Royal Hotel, where the Turks and Arabs of distinction, who come to visit his Highness, lodge. On the same side are magnificent baths, which look towards the sea, then the harem, and, at the extremity of the peninsula, the palace of Ibrahim.

Before you reach this magnificent palace, this superb hotel, you have to pass before a row of cabins, or rather of enormous holes dug in the ground, in which dwell whole families, men and women, spare and emaciated, surrounded by children, naked and ugly, whose cadaverous hue bespeaks the most abject and disgusting indigence. You imagine, no doubt, that this painful and revolting spectacle has not been placed in vain by Providence at the distance of a few paces from a prince, who cannot stir a step without its meeting his eye ; and that, touched by the distress which he is forced to observe, he cannot be more efficaciously urged to relieve it ; but you are mistaken : he never bestows a thought on the subject.

Having reached the palace, after ascending a wide and very handsome staircase, on the sides of which were ranged military and civil officers, attendants, and slaves

of the prince's, we entered a spacious hall, where we found a number of persons who came to speak to the viceroy, along with some of his officers. As we were expected, we were forthwith ushered into the Divan. This is an immense saloon, elegantly fitted up, and around which, along the walls, are placed piles of cushions. Mehemet was seated at one of the angles, on a carpet of cloth of gold ; he was smoking his pipe, and talking with the commandant of the place and another person of distinction. These he dismissed as soon as he saw us. We paid our obeisance in the European fashion ; he laid his hand upon his heart, and made us a sign to sit down by him, the consul-general on his left, and I on his right. His dragoman was standing in front of him, and the Austrian consul's behind me. As soon as we were seated, coffee was brought to us. Then, in terms of kindness and regard, he opened a conversation which, to the great surprise of his whole court, lasted three hours. There was no end to his questions about Europe, and he appeared to listen to my answers with particular attention. He took pleasure in relating to me the circumstances of his life, in directing my attention to the traits of character by which he thinks that he is distinguished, and which are in fact observable in him ; he boasted, in particular, of his prodigious memory, declaring that " he knew but one man in his extensive dominions who really surpassed him in this particular, and that was Ghaly, his minister of the finances."

I had made up my mind, as a matter of prudence, to abstain from all allusion to his struggle with the Sultan : he was the first to advert to that delicate subject. He

entered with a sort of complacency into a detail of the "reasons which had forced him," he said, "in spite of himself, into that war, and *had pained his heart exceedingly.*"

In these statements he frequently introduced the name of God, which he never uttered without all the outward marks of deep respect, or without acknowledging his greatness. "Never had he undertaken any action of importance till he had lifted up his heart in prayer to the Almighty, and consulted him;" and while thus talking to me, his head, the beauty of which is heightened by a long, white, bushy beard, assumed a religious attitude; his eyes sparkled; his keen and piercing look was directed upward, and fixed on heaven. Was this genuine Mussulman piety, or did he act thus because he was addressing a monk? you may guess. I shall merely observe that his Highness professes exquisite tact; that he is particularly anxious to gain the good opinion of foreigners, and that I never saw any great personage manifest in a higher degree the appearance of frankness, confidence, and ease.

One idea, however, annoyed, tormented, overwhelmed me. "This man," said I to myself, "beside whom thou art sitting, whose garments touch thine, may, without any other motive but sheer whim, cause as many heads to be struck off as he pleases; and neither the widow, nor the aged man, nor the orphan, would dare ask why he has deprived them of a husband, a son, a father" — and then I recollected that this same man, on whose cushions I was sitting, had, in order to secure to himself the supreme power, put to death nearly five hundred persons



invited by him to a solemnity, taking advantage of their eagerness to attend it for the purpose of accomplishing their destruction . . . . and methought I could perceive spots of blood upon his garments, and the name of **TYRANT** branded in letters of fire upon his brow.

At times, the civilities which he lavished upon me, the tone of friendship, of confidence, with which he seemed to open his heart, would weaken these painful impressions; nay, I even caught myself saying flattering things to him. Then I was all at once seized with a remorse, which forced me to compose my countenance lest I should betray it.

The prince shows himself an enthusiastic partisan of innovations in politics, in administration, and, above all, in industry. He adopts them with warmth, frequently without reflection or examination. He talked a great deal about the plan which he has formed of running steam-carriages between Damascus and Cairo. He purposes to send engineers to survey the route; and if, upon their report, he does not see too many obstacles to the execution of his plan, he will immediately send orders to London for those new carriages, which he is impatient to see in action.

During our conversation, some one came to tell him that the telegraph had just communicated the arrival at Cairo of a courier from Ibrahim in Syria. His countenance assumed, for a moment, a serious look; he appeared to be engrossed by grave thoughts; but presently he resumed the conversation with the same kindness and the same appearance of cordiality as before.

I must not omit a curious circumstance of this inter-

view—Mehemet Ali not only smokes, like all the Mussulmans, but he is in the habit of taking snuff. Every quarter of an hour, an officer of the chamber enters the Divan, and holds before him a gold snuff-box, with all the demonstrations of profound respect. Mehemet takes a pinch ; the officer bows in silence, and retires humbly as he came. This ceremony was repeated ten or twelve times in our presence.

When I went to the palace, it was easy for me to perceive, that to all the persons of Mehemet's court I was merely an object of curiosity, to whom not the least mark of honour is due : at my departure, the case was totally different. The long conference, with which I had been honoured by his Highness, had produced an extraordinary impression. It was thought that the sovereign of Egypt, the powerful Mehemet, could not condescend to talk so long, and especially so familiarly, with a poor European monk, a pitiful Christian ; still less were his courtiers able to conceive what he could have talked about. Each had a motive to assign for this extraordinary conference. Some had no doubt that I was an envoy, commissioned to effect a reconciliation between the monarch and the subject. I had become an important personage in the estimation of all : they crowded round me as I passed. I saw the courtiers of Alexandria do for me what I had seen the courtiers of Europe do for so many others : I was loaded with marks of civility, attention, and respect.

On retiring, I called to see M. Bogos-Joussouff, a schismatic Armenian, chief dragoman to Mehemet, and director-general of the department of commerce. He is

the prime-minister of his Highness. His power is immense. He governs all Egypt, in some measure, in the name of his master. "After visiting Pharaoh," said I, on introducing myself to him, "I am come to see Joseph." This compliment flattered him the more, because the name Joussouff, which he bears, signifies Joseph. He received me in the kindest manner. He is a man of extraordinary talents, assiduous, active, indefatigable. Mehemet Ali is affectionately attached to him. He has made him his confidant, his Mentor, through whom he conducts all affairs of state. He transacts business with him, both night and day, sometimes for three, at others four, or even five hours successively. Still this chief dragoman, this director-general, this minister, this confidant, this Mentor, even though harassed by broken rest, and dying of fatigue, never has heard, and never will hear, these kind words issue from the lips of his master : " Bogos, be seated." Let him that will be the favourite in Egypt, or, indeed, in any other country !

I earnestly requested M. Bogos to have the goodness to remind his Highness of my firman, and the letters of recommendation, which he had promised me for the governors of the different provinces of Egypt; and I retired with the assurance that, very early next morning, my wishes on that head should be fulfilled.

Meanwhile I hastened the preparations for my journey to Mount Sinai, having made up my mind to leave Alexandria as soon as I could set out with safety.

The weather here is terrible. I had heard much about the mildness of the winter in Egypt. In the month

that I have passed here, I have not seen one fine day : nothing but rain and severe cold ; indeed more severe than I ever felt at Petersburg. There, at least, you can protect yourself from it : here the thing is impossible, no precautions being taken against it.

At length I received the viceroy's firman, with a letter of recommendation for the governor of Cairo. These papers were accompanied with a translation as follows :

“FIRMAN,

“In the name of the Supreme Being,

“The bearer of the present order (*bouyrouldon*) is one of the nobles of Hungary, named Father Marie Joseph de Geramb, a religious traveller, and a personage highly distinguished in the world. His object being to travel, without obstacle and opposition, from Alexandria to Cairo, and thence to Mount Sinai and its environs, by way of Suez, we have been applied to for this order, which has been graciously granted to him. With the aid of the Most High, no obstacle shall be placed in the way of his travels, and all the assistance due to friendship shall be afforded him when needful. This order, which is addressed to you, and which has been delivered to him, has been issued by us for this purpose.

“In consequence you will conform to its contents, and beware of doing the contrary.

“In the year 1248, the 25th of Regeb.”

LETTER FROM MEHEMET ALI TO HIS EXCELLENCY

HABIB EFFENDI, INSPECTOR OF THE DIVAN.

“My brother, Habib Effendi, inspector of the Divan,

“Our very dear friend, the traveller, one of the nobles

of Hungary, Father Marie Joseph de Geramb, wishing to visit Mount Sinai, is just setting out for Cairo. My will is that you afford him every protection ; and, that he may travel safely and quietly, you will direct the sheiks to let him be accompanied by men who shall conduct him to the said place.

“In the year 1248, the 26th of Regeb.”

My preparations are completed. To the other kindnesses which he has shown me, the consul-general of Austria has added that of lending me his tent, a thing absolutely necessary in the desert. He has also had the attention to recommend me in a particular manner to the care of an excellent janissary, who has made numerous journeys, and whom I have taken into my service. This man speaks Turkish, Arabic, and Italian, and he is equally active and courageous. His name is Mahomet. The only thing that annoys me is the show that he makes : he looks like a pacha. By his side I shall appear to be but some poor devil whom his excellency is taking with him in his retinue out of charity. At any rate, it will afford me an excellent opportunity for practising humility.

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### LETTER XLVI.

DEPARTURE FROM ALEXANDRIA—CANAL OF MAMOUDIEH—THE NILE—FOUAH—DANGEROUS NAVIGATION OF THE NILE—ARAB FISHERMEN—DISTRESSED PASSENGERS—WRETCHED STATE OF EGYPT—CREW OF A SUNKEN VESSEL—PYRAMIDS—BOULAK—CAIRO—M. CHAMPION, AUSTRIAN VICE-CONSUL—FRANCISCAN CONVENT—VISIT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE MINISTER AT WAR—VISIT TO THE CATHOLIC CLERGY.

Cairo, January 16, 1832.

I left Alexandria in the evening of the 6th of January, and embarked on the canal of Mamoudieh. The Aus-

trian chief dragoman had the kindness to accompany me a league from the city. Our bark had two cabins ; small, it is true, but tolerably commodious.

The canal of Mamoudieh is a work of Mehemet Ali's. He commenced it in 1820, for the purpose of establishing a communication between Cairo and Alexandria, and gave it the name of the prince whom he is now striving to dethrone. The works undertaken to render it navigable in all seasons have been frequently interrupted ; they are not yet completely finished. It is twelve feet deep, and about fifteen leagues in length. One hundred and thirty thousand persons were employed upon it for three years. Neither old men, women, children, were exempted, nor even pregnant women : some were delivered while at work, and others were hurt ; but these accidents procured not the least indulgence, excited not the least pity. Most of them had neither mattock nor shovel, nor any other implement to work with, neither was care taken to furnish them with any : the unfortunate creatures were obliged to remove the earth with their hands. Twenty-eight thousand of them perished, owing to the heat, fatigue, or ill usage. The circumstances of cruelty which I have collected from the lips of eye-witnesses make one shudder, my pen refuses to detail them.

The wind being quite favourable, we advanced rapidly. The night was magnificent : a bright moonlight enabled us to distinguish objects as well as in broad day ; only, at intervals, the heaps of earth, thrown up in digging the bed of the canal, prevented the eye from embracing the whole extent of the prospect. The banks are bare : be-

yond them are seen a few country-houses, and among others that of Ibrahim.

On the 7th, at nine in the morning, I arrived at Alf, a small port, about five hundred paces from the Nile. Here you land ; and here I found a regiment of Hulans, as remarkable for its superb horses and its general appearance as any European regiment. It was going to Alexandria. I had a letter of recommendation for the commandant of Alf, but he was so engaged with the passage of the troops coming from Upper Egypt, that it was impossible for Mahomet, my janissary, to gain admittance to him. I was obliged to bargain myself for a bark, wherein to continue my voyage to Cairo. I could not meet with any but a very large one, with two cabins, and a crew of sixteen men.

While they were carrying my baggage on board, I perceived Mahomet among a crowd of Arabs, violently exerting himself, and assisting a Turk to throw upon the ground one of the crew of the vessel which had brought me from Alexandria. I hastened to the spot, and soon learned that this man had been caught in the act of stealing two loaves of my store, and that they were going to give him the bastinado. Luckily, I arrived in time : I earnestly solicited the sheik who awarded the punishment to pardon the culprit. He hesitated : I stepped up to him, pointed to heaven, and pronounced the word *Allah!* He laid his hand upon his heart, and immediately set at liberty the poor Arab, who, still trembling with fear, appeared quite stupified on seeing that it was to the person whom he had wronged that he was indebted for his pardon.

At length, my eyes beheld the “king of rivers,” the river which no traveller has approached without a strong feeling of curiosity, of which none has spoken with indifference—the Nile. I embarked immediately. The shore was covered with small craft, full of soldiers. We had great difficulty to get clear of it. On reaching the middle of the stream, we found the wind so contrary that we were obliged to steer for Fouah, on the opposite bank, and there lie-to till the following day.

Fouah is a small town, to which a staple traffic gave some importance not two centuries ago. Since that time it has been continually declining. It is very ill-built. Most of its houses are mere huts. Here are to be seen some manufactories of Egyptian caps, called *tarbouches*. The mosques are almost the only buildings that indicate its former prosperity.

On the 8th, the wind had not shifted. It was impossible for us to get away. I spent part of the night in reading and writing. The clamorous and incessant chatter of the crew annoyed me : at last I contrived to silence it. From time to time I left my cabin to admire the serene sky of Egypt, to contemplate the river and its beautiful banks, tinged by the soft light of the moon. I could not reflect without lively joy, that this land through which I was travelling had been visited by my Saviour ; that thither he had been carried by Joseph, agreeably to the injunction of the angel : — “ Take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word,” (Matt. ii. 13) ; and that then, according to the interpretation of the Fathers, was fulfilled this prophecy of Isaiah : — “ The Lord shall come



into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence." (Is. xix. 1.)

As the climate is intensely hot, and it scarcely ever rains there, Egypt would be absolutely sterile and uninhabitable but for the Nile : hence there is no river whose benefits are more justly appreciated. The Egyptians cannot find expressions strong enough to praise it as it deserves : with them the Nile is the good, the blessed, the holy, the abundant, the gift of God, the sacred. They are sensible, and they take delight in acknowledging on all occasions, that to it they are indebted for every thing. Its waters vivify the tracts over which they spread ; they fertilize the soil, not only of themselves, but also by means of the mud which they bring with them, and which they leave on retiring ; distributed in an infinity of channels which man has opened for them, they supply him, as well as the animals around him, with the drink which they need ; they irrigate his gardens and his fields ; they soften and prepare ground to receive the seed, and spare the husbandman the labour of tracing with the plough the furrow to which it is to be consigned.

The periodical rise of the Nile, on which the existence and prosperity of Egypt depend, takes place every year, about the 20th of June. In the middle of the following month, the waters begin to overflow ; and they keep gradually swelling till they have inundated the whole country. In the last days of September they subside, but very slowly, and it is not till the approach of November that they have quite retired within their bed ; which has caused certain writers, who overlook slight differences, to

assert that they take the same time to increase as to subside. Meanwhile, Egypt is like a vast sea, from amidst which rise towns and villages, all built on ground so high as to run no risk of being overflowed.

It is by the height of the inundation that a judgment is formed of the fertility or unproductiveness of the following year. When it has risen sixteen Egyptian ells, it has reached the most favourable point. This happy event is immediately proclaimed by the cry : — “ God hath granted us abundance,” which is heard everywhere. Egypt then gives itself up to joy, and celebrates its good fortune by extraordinary festivities. It was the same in the time of the ancients, who considered a rise of sixteen cubits as an infallible sign of a plentiful crop. “ Below that,” says Pliny, “ there is not sufficient water to irrigate all the land ; above it, the water would take too much time to retire.”

The degrees of elevation are marked annually upon a pillar in one of the mosques at Cairo. Before the Christian era, they were noted upon a similar column in the temple of the god Serapis, to whose bounty Egyptian credulity attributed the favour of the inundation. At the time when the gospel was first preached, the princes, in order to deter their subjects from embracing the Christian faith, threatened them with the wrath of the god, who, they said, would revenge himself by dooming their country to drought and sterility. The Christians multiplied, nevertheless ; and at length they carried away the pillar of Serapis from the temple, and removed it to their church in Alexandria, and the vengeance of God is yet to come.

Among such of the ancients as investigated the causes of the periodical inundation of the Nile, several conjectured that it was owing to the abundant rains which fall in Ethiopia, from the month of May till the month of September. This is a fact which at the present day no one doubts: it is confirmed by the observations and the unanimous testimony of all travellers.

In Upper Egypt the Nile runs in a single bed, between two chains of mountains, separated by a valley, narrow in some places, and from four to five leagues wide in others. At some distance from Cairo, it divides into several branches; the two most considerable of which form, with the Mediterranean, an immense triangle, called the Delta, from its resemblance to the Greek letter of that name. The tract comprised between the three lines of this triangle is the most fertile of the whole country; this is Lower Egypt.

The wind having become favourable, we started from Fouah at five in the morning. Our vessel cleaved the water with the swiftness of lightning, but we were not free from apprehension. The navigation of the Nile is attended with great danger, and accidents are frequent. Without great care, you run the risk of being caught by whirlwinds, the violence of which is the more liable to capsize vessels, because they carry a mast of greatly disproportionate height, and to which an immense lateen sail is attached. Mehemet Ali and his son, Ibrahim, had more than once well nigh perished in this manner. These barks, here called *canges*, are long but not strong vessels, looking like Venetian gondolas on a large scale, with this difference, that the cabin, instead of being in the middle, as in the latter, is below.

In the course of the day, I saw some Arab fishermen, too poor to provide themselves with a boat, who had tied together a great quantity of dry and empty gourds, and, having laid upon them a few wretched planks, committed themselves to the caprice of the waves on this frail raft, thus risking their lives for the sake of catching a few fish.

The favourable wind, which had carried us forward a great way, shifted at sun-set. We brought-to at Eafreseath, to pass the night there.

Eafreseath is a village, which, like all those that are met with on the banks of the Nile, has nothing agreeable but its situation. It is an assemblage of wretched mud huts, which you would rather take for the dens of wild beasts than the dwellings of human beings. In the centre stands a tolerably well-built mosque, surmounted by a minaret of beautiful workmanship, and extremely white, which, by the contrast, renders the aspect of the huts so much the more hideous. Around it are numerous palm-trees, whose lofty foliage seems disposed to hide such abject wretchedness from view. This village has a port. It is one of the greatest staples for corn belonging to the pacha.

On the 9th, before daybreak, I was suddenly roused from sleep by sobs and cries, which seemed to proceed from the very bark in which I lay. Persuaded that, contrary to my express prohibition, the master had admitted strangers, I had thoughts of going instantly to reproach him with this violation of my orders ; but, fatigued with the voyage and preceding vigils, I fell asleep again. Scarcely had I closed my eyes, however, when I was

again wakened by fresh clamours. I rose in haste, and no sooner was I out of my cabin, than I discovered that the noise which I had heard proceeded from a neighbouring cange. Wretched mothers, with their daughters, some of them holding young infants in their arms, were overwhelmed with affliction; and it was their lamentations, their moans, which had disturbed my slumbers. They came from Cairo, and were going to Alexandria, to their husbands, their sons, their brothers, who a few days before had been conveyed thither in chains to be incorporated in Ibrahim's army. They were going to bid them a farewell, which for many of them would probably be the last. The night was extremely cold; they had passed it in a miserable open boat, without any other protection than the rags which covered their nakedness. Such as had children pressed them to their bosoms to warm their chilled limbs. To add to their wretchedness, these poor creatures were suffering the pangs of hunger: their bread was exhausted. One of them had seen her three eldest sons torn from her; and she was dragging along with her four young children. She was deficient fourteen sous only to pay their passage, and the master had inhumanly taken from her a bundle of mean clothing with which she defended those innocent creatures from the severity of the weather. I do not recollect to have witnessed in all my life a more distressing scene. Fortunately, there was one at hand who relieved them. The fare of the unhappy mother was paid, and a few baskets of bread were carried on board to appease the hunger of the famishing passengers. But, even then, what pain was it not to me to see all

those eyes, dim with grief, fixed sorrowfully on the piece that was thrown to them, and those hands lifted to grasp it, and that eagerness with which it was devoured ! O, my friend ! how I wished that I could have assembled the wealthy of the world around that bark, to make them witnesses of this melancholy scene ! For a few moments, at least, sighs and complaints were interrupted by the blessings of gratitude. A few minutes afterwards the bark proceeded on her voyage.

During the day, the wind was constantly favourable. We passed a long file of boats laden with bales of cotton, which, piled one upon another, looked, as they approached us, like floating islands, or rather hills. The villages, more numerous, and not less happily situated than those which we had previously seen, the rich and fertile lands around them, the banks, most commonly bordered by sycamore, citron, and palm-trees, presented enchanting views. One thing alone was wanting to complete the beauty of the scene : the water of the great river has neither the transparency nor the azure of most of our European rivers. Yellow and turbid, it thus breaks, if I may be allowed the expression, the harmony of the prospect. It is so muddy that, for several months in the year, people cannot drink it till it has stood to settle. They clarify it more speedily by rubbing the vessel in which it is kept with bitter almonds. This is a precaution, however, which I dispense with ; and, nevertheless, I find it not only wholesome but delicious, and so suitable to my stomach that I have renounced every other beverage.

At ten in the evening we arrived at Nadir, a small, mean village, the mosque of which is falling to ruin.

Next morning, as soon as it was light, I went to take a walk in the environs. I stopped to look closely at the channels which convey the water of the river to the adjacent lands. I found them in a very bad state, but I was struck by the astonishing fertility of the soil. Nowhere can vegetation be more vigorous, more active; and yet, along with this prodigious fecundity, what indigence! If I relate to you what I have seen, will you believe me?

In this country, so highly favoured by Nature, there are married couples who have between them but a single garment, a sort of shirt of blue cloth, coarse, and filthy. When one is obliged to go out, he or she puts it on, leaving the other lying in the straw, or hiding in a corner of the wretched hut. Naked children are running to and fro; they accost you without shame, without appearing to suspect that there is such a thing as modesty; and in this state they talk to you, annoy you, and ask your charity. The plentiful, the prodigious, crops, with which bounteous Heaven covers this land, belonging not to those who raise them with the sweat of their brow, no part of the produce is their's. I have seen these miserable creatures grubbing about here and there for food, like animals, brousing the grass as they do, and deeming themselves fortunate if they can thus appease the cravings of hunger unmolested. There is now but a single proprietor in the whole country—Mehemet Ali. He has seized every thing; he disposes of every thing—men, women, children, life, money, goods, are all at the

mercy of his despotism, and must all subserve, when he pleases, and how he pleases, to his gigantic projects. Little does he care for the misery of those whom his tyranny oppresses; he sees it with dry eyes. He looks coldly, without pity, without remorse, at the multitude of wretched creatures, of widows, of orphans, that he has made. Wealth, power — those are his gods, and to them he sacrifices innumerable victims.

As I was returning on board, my janissary directed my attention to four sailors, sadly sitting on the bank, and with their hands covering their faces to hide their tears. They belonged to a vessel bound from Cairo to Alexandria, with a cargo of gum-arabic and saltpetre, which had sunk the day before. Nothing was saved, and two of their comrades had gone to the bottom with the vessel. A plank, luckily detached from the bark, had alone preserved them from the like fate.

The wind, during the whole day, was extremely variable. The Nile, whose course now becomes winding, presented to the view nought but sterile banks, entirely destitute of verdure. On the side next to the desert, on a bare eminence, we perceived very near to us the village of Monischabé, peopled by Bedouin Arabs. The ground, the houses, the very inhabitants, whom we could easily distinguish, were all of one uniform sombre and blackish colour. The number of villages like this, inhabited by Bedouins, was formerly considerable on the Lybian bank. As they were the haunts of very clever and very wily robbers, who never left them but to fall unawares upon vessels ascending or descending the river, plundering them and hiding their booty in the



sands of the desert, Mehemet has destroyed several of them ; but enough are still left to alarm travellers, and to keep them upon their guard, especially during the night.

We were not more than twelve leagues from the capital. As we advanced, I saw less, I scarcely observed what was close to me ; my thoughts, my eyes, were directed towards Cairo ; they were seeking the pyramids. "Be easy," said Mahomet, my janissary, twenty times in the course of the day ; "do not fatigue yourself with trying to discover them : I will show them to you at the moment when you will least suspect that they are in sight." And he occupied himself about something else in the cange, merely looking out ahead now and then, and saying to me, with the air of a man perfectly sure of his point : "All in good time ; have patience ; we are not there yet." My eyes, nevertheless, gazed intently in the direction in which the wonder of Egypt must at last make its appearance. All at once, I discerned what appeared to be the points of two or three triangles shooting up into the sky. "There they are ! there they are !" I exclaimed : "Mahomet, there they are !" — and poor Mahomet ran to me, confused and disconcerted at not having been the first to discover and point out to me objects with which he was so familiar. He should certainly have seen them before me, he said, if, by an unlucky accident, he had not been detained elsewhere. I refrained from contradicting him : it would only have aggravated his mortification.

It was not long that I enjoyed the sight which I had been so impatient to gain : night approached, dropping

her veil, as if out of jealousy to deprive me of it. We arrived very late at the little village of Gurciss, and there stopped.

On the following morning, I was stirring, as usual, by daybreak. As a dead calm prevented us from starting, I took a survey of the environs, and directed my course towards a grove of palm-trees, with the intention of walking about in it while reciting the service of the day.

Scarcely had I reached it, when a countless multitude of ravens sallied forth, and with furious croaking rushed upon me to prevent my entry. This host was so considerable as to darken the air. To no purpose I strove to drive them away : so far from being scared by any effort that I made, they pursued me without intermission, till they had fairly forced me to retreat. Having never before observed any thing of the kind, I suspected that they might have nests in the palm-trees, and I attributed the courage, or rather the animosity to which I had been obliged to yield, to that instinct of affection for their young which Providence has implanted in all living creatures. What a difference, by the by, between these birds and the other species that may be remarked in the short voyage upon the Nile ! To say nothing of the aquatic birds, the wild-ducks, geese, swans, cranes, &c., several of which at times escort the traveller, and are fond of getting near him, as if to give him an opportunity of admiring them, thousands of others, of all sorts, come wheeling and sporting about the canges, even settling upon them, and charming the passengers by their familiarity and their lays. Among these various species,

the European observes, not without a lively feeling of pleasure, some of those of his own country : the sparrow, the wagtail, which alight upon his table, pick up the crumbs, and, I might almost say, touch his hand, glad, as it were, to renew acquaintance, to see at least a compatriot, who, in distant lands, is always a friend.

The wind afterwards shifted, and the master summoned us on board. The banks of the Nile were still sterile. On the right we had the chain of mountains which separates Egypt from Lybia, and in front Mount Mokatan, placed as if for a dyke to stop the burning sands which the winds sometimes drive before them, and to prevent them from parching, or even burying, the rich vegetation of Egypt. My eyes were speedily fixed again upon the pyramids.

At the distance at which we were, they looked exactly like those lofty mountains whose creation is the work of the Almighty. Their bases, like those of the hills, seemed to be rooted in the bowels of the earth, and their lofty summits were lost in the clouds : but I was aware that they were erected only at the despotic command of bad kings, and by the forced labour of an enslaved and oppressed people. In spite of my admiration of the work, I was painfully affected ; I felt more forcibly than ever how much there is that is petty, pitiful, humiliating, in the most gigantic undertakings of pride. These so celebrated monuments, these monuments, the most durable, without the least doubt, of all those by which men have wished to display their power and their greatness, in which they have striven, as it were, to rival Nature, to rival God himself — what have they proclaimed,

what do they proclaim, to successive generations, but the crimes, the injustice, the follies, the worthlessness, the nothingness, of their authors? These prodigious masses of enormous stones, what are they, after all? Tombs, and what tombs? Empty tombs, in which not even the mighty ones who prepared them for their last abode have rested. Impious kings, oppressors of their subjects, enemies of the gods, objects of universal hatred and execration, obliged to take the most secret precautions to withdraw their bodies from the public judgment, which they foresaw must deprive them of the honours of sepulture—princesses dishonoured by the infamy of their lives — such are the recollections awakened by the most magnificent pyramids. Instead of the glory which they had anticipated from them, those by whose order they were constructed could not even carry with them at their death the miserable consolation of saying that they had at least a sepulchre left.

Such were my meditations, the while our bark was rapidly approaching its destination. Towards evening we made a halt of two hours only, after which, impatient to arrive, I gave orders for resuming our route.

Next morning, at six o'clock, the capital of Egypt lay before us. I was already rejoicing at having reached it, when a sudden and violent gust of wind met our vessel, broke the rudder, and drove us to the opposite bank. I immediately threw myself, with Mahomet, into a small boat, and, by dint of rowing, in half an hour we landed at Boulak, which adjoins Cairo and is its harbour.

As soon as we were on shore, Mahomet hastened, by my order, to hire asses for me and himself; for here, as

at Alexandria, those animals supply the place of hackney-coaches and cabriolets : and there was he, carrying his thick cane with large silver head in his hand, going before me, commanding the people to make room, in spite of my prohibition, striking, right and left, at any one who did not get out of the way expeditiously enough, and conducting me in a gallop to the Austrian consulate.

M. Champion, our vice-consul, being already apprized of my arrival, was waiting for me. He gave me the most cordial welcome ; and, to the other civilities which he lavished upon me, he added the favour of taking me himself to the convent of the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Land ; and he did not leave me till he had expressed an earnest desire to render me any service in his power. The next day I availed myself of this obliging offer.

Accompanied by the vice-consul, the chancellor, the dragomans, and the janissary, I paid a visit of etiquette to the governor, and delivered to him the letter of recommendation given me by the viceroy. We then called on the minister at war. I was everywhere received with marked distinction.

On my return to the monastery, I there found the Greek catholic bishop, the Coptic catholic bishop, the Franciscan missionaries of the Reform, and the Catholic, Coptic, Armenian, and Greek clergy, waiting for me. On this, more than on any ordinary occasion, I regretted that I could not converse but through the medium of an interpreter. This visit was full of civilities, but very short, like all visits of ceremony. I foresee that for some days I shall have a certain number to receive and to pay,

and that, with the occupations indispensable in my position, I shall not so soon be master of my time. Hence I know not when I may be able to resume my pen.

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## LETTER XLVII.

CAIRO—DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY—ABDALLAH PACHA.

Cairo, January 25th, 1833.

I return to you, my dear friend, sooner than I hoped at the moment when I was finishing my last letter. Business, and the first perplexities with which I found myself beset, made me fear that I should be obliged to defer the pleasure of writing to you much longer. Luckily, I have been able to dispose of all indispensable matters in a few days ; and, this task performed, I began as usual to run about, to see, to observe, to question, to pick up the observations of others, and now I hasten to transmit to you at least part of the result.

The capital of Egypt is not called by the Arabs *El Kahira*, the Victorious, the name given to it by its founder. They commonly call it Masr, which some take to be derived from the first syllable of Misraim (Egypt), and which, according to others, signifies the Beautiful Place. The Arabs likewise name it Omm el Dounya, mother of the world, great among the great, delight of the imagination, smile of the Prophet. It is situated on the right bank of the Nile, with which it communicates by means of a canal. It is composed of three totally distinct parts, about half a league asunder — Boulak to the south, Old Cairo to the east, and Cairo, properly so called, or Grand Cairo, to the north of Boulak.

Boulak, considered as a suburb of Cairo, is its principal port : it forms a separate town. It was built in the first century of the Hegira. Its population, small before the usurpation of Mehemet Ali, has since risen to more than eighteen thousand souls, and is fast increasing every day. It contains some very handsome new buildings, mostly in the European style : they have been erected by the command and at the expence of the viceroy. Among them are the custom-house, the Arabic printing-office, a college, baths, manufactories, and a superb cannon-foundry.

Old Cairo, according to some historians, dates from a period anterior to Cambyzes, that is to say, earlier than the fifth century before Christ. It is, according to them, the ancient Egyptian Babylon. The discussion of this opinion would be foreign to the subject of these letters : if it be true, we must conclude that Amrou, Omar's general, to whom other writers attribute the foundation of Old Cairo by the name of Fostat, only rebuilt the city. It forms a second port.

Cairo, properly so called, or Grand Cairo, stands in a sandy plain. According to the plan of it, drawn about the middle of last century by Niebuhr, this city, with the other two parts, which are commonly comprehended in one general name, is at least three leagues in circumference. But the ground comprised within that compass is by no means like that of our great European cities, entirely covered with buildings, streets, and public places. Besides numerous and extensive gardens, you remark many vacant spaces, and a great quantity of ruins. These, owing to the animation imparted to the

city, are disappearing at several points, to make room for the buildings and embellishments which the activity of the viceroy delights in creating.

In coming from Boulak—where, as I told you, we landed—Cairo, which, when seen from any other side, exhibits a cheerful and pleasing aspect, appeared to be but a confused mass of brick walls and houses, among which we could not even distinguish any public buildings civil or religious, which, on the approach to great cities, in general strike the eye at a distance, either by their form or their elevation. This was to us a subject of no small surprise. But what astonished me much more was, that almost countless multitude of unpaved, narrow, irregular, crooked streets, which seem to have no outlet, such as I have not remarked elsewhere since I have been in the East. There are some through which a man on horseback can scarcely pass. The broadest are those where persons of a certain rank reside, and those of the markets; these it is necessary to cover over-head, to screen them from the sun, whose heat is insupportable. Some are almost deserted, others extremely populous, and the latter are most numerous. The crowd in them is immense, pushing, pressing, rushing, like the waves of the sea. It is difficult to get through it. When I go out, a janissary precedes me with uplifted cane; and it requires all his threats and the utmost efforts of his lungs to clear a passage for me. Harems, under the care of eunuchs, files of camels heavily laden, piquets of soldiers going to relieve guard, high personages on horseback or on mules, persons of all conditions on asses, are incessantly meeting, crossing, gliding past each other, and,



most extraordinary ! all threading their way, with more or less speed, without collision, without accident, even in places which appear to be completely blocked up by the multitude. Persons who are not on foot are always attended by *sais*, a sort of grooms, whose duty it is to make way for their employer, and to hold the animal that he rides when he alights, and stops any where. With the incessant cries kept up by these *sais* of " Room there !" which ring on every side, are mingled those of children, whom their mothers are carrying in their arms or on their shoulders, those of dealers offering their wares, those of the many blind people who jostle you, the braying of asses, the barking of dogs, producing together a din to which any ear that is not Egyptian can scarcely get accustomed.

The streets of Cairo are divided into fifty-five quarters, which are shut in by gates. Several of these quarters are designated only by the name of those by whom they are inhabited, as the quarter of the Franks, that of the Greeks, the Copts, the Jews. This last is the worst built and the filthiest. In each of them you meet with numerous water-troughs for animals, and several cisterns for the supply of the population ; but the water is in general bad, and has a disagreeable taste ; so that it is only the poor, or passengers pressed by thirst, that fetch or drink of it. People in general prefer drinking the Nile water, which is fetched from the river in skins.

According to Father Sicard, a celebrated Jesuit, who died at Cairo about the beginning of the last century, there was at that time in the city but one large square, that of Roumelyeh : there are now four, remarkable for

their extent, exclusively of a much greater number of small ones.

The houses differ from those which I have seen in other cities of the East, in being most of them two, and even three, stories high. As they have very low doors, and no windows next the street, nothing is to be seen but high naked walls, which give them a duller appearance than that of a prison. Most of them are of brick. Ill built and worse arranged, they are generally inconvenient, with the exception, however, of those of wealthy people, and the palaces of persons holding offices and dignities; but even these exhibit no external indications of grandeur and magnificence. Luxury and decorations are reserved exclusively for the interior, and for the courts, several of which are paved with marble, and adorned with basins, from the centre of which rise fountains, that, while they adorn, keep them at the same time refreshingly cool.

The mosques, in general, are distinguished from the other public buildings by the regularity and elegance of their construction. They are very numerous. According to the accounts of older travellers, they amounted, a century ago, to seven hundred and twenty. I know not whether there is any mistake in the number; the moderns reckon no more than four hundred, including large and small.

I should be tedious were I to attempt to describe the baths, the bazaars, the warehouses for merchandize, and were I to add an account of all that has been done of late; suffice it, therefore, to observe, that those who have not seen the capital of Egypt for the last twenty years would

scarcely know it again ; not merely on account of the new buildings, the new palaces, the new manufactories, the new schools, the new establishments, the new administration, in short, the material changes which have intervened ; but principally on account of the revolution which has taken place in manners and customs, but especially in the intercourse with, and treatment of, foreigners. Thirty years ago, a European would not have shown himself at Cairo in the dress of his country, without exposing himself to insult and ill-treatment. If, when on horseback, he had met a Turk of distinction, he would have been obliged to alight, and to endure abuse and scorn patiently and without a reply.

More recently, as the wife of the Prussian consul was passing a coffee-house with her daughter, a Turk, rushing from it like a madman, fired a pistol at the latter, and killed her in the arms of her mother. This murder struck terror into the Europeans residing in the city, and not one of them durst call for vengeance. The murderer, it is true, was punished ; he was hanged : but justice was done solely because the unfortunate victim belonged to a man who represented his sovereign at Cairo : but for this particular circumstance, he might have boasted of his crime with impunity. Now-a-days, so far from this being the case, the slightest insult, any offensive expression used in public against a Frank, would draw down upon the culprit a chastisement equally prompt and severe ; or, to speak more correctly, no Mussulman subject of the viceroy's would dare to deserve it. There was a time when it would have been deemed a sacrilege worthy of death for a foreign woman

to appear in a turban of a green colour, which, as you know, is the colour of the Prophet. Well, I have seen at Cairo elegant ladies, dressed in the French fashion, with green turbans, walking in the most frequented quarters of the city, just as quietly as they might have done in London, or Vienna, while not a creature seemed to take offence at it. At this moment a European enjoys greater liberty in Egypt than anywhere else.

Much has been written, and different opinions are entertained respecting the population of Cairo : it is impossible to form any precise estimate of it. The present Sultan himself is not acquainted with it. Nothing but a census could settle the point : he ordered the pacha to cause a census to be taken, but was not obeyed. At the time of the French expedition under Bonaparte, this operation was undertaken ; but it was, of course, inaccurate, because those by whom it was performed took no account of the slaves and the harems. In a note from generals Gubbeau and Duranteau to Dr. Desgenettes, it is stated that the number of inhabitants in Grand Cairo amounted to three hundred thousand, exclusively of those in the citadel, Old Cairo, and Boulak. Persons whom I have every reason to consider as well informed as any one can be, in a country where no register of births, marriages, and deaths, is kept, have assured me that the total population of the three divisions of the city is at this present time about five hundred thousand souls ; and, if we compare the former state of Cairo with its present increase, we shall be forced to admit that this calculation, if not strictly accurate, at least approaches nearest to the truth.

I left Alexandria with the intention of visiting at Cairo the too famous Abdallah Pacha, Mehemet Ali's prisoner, and I had previously ascertained that the new government would not take umbrage if I did so. Far from me was the idea of wishing, or appearing to insult misfortune, well as it might be deserved ; but, independently of the curiosity natural on such occasions, the sight of a man whose name had rung throughout Europe, who yet passed with some for a hero, atoning in captivity for his sanguinary despotism, and for the unworthy cowardice by which he had consummated his ruin, was not to my thinking a spectacle destitute of interest and instruction. Once master of Palestine, and of the pachalik, whose capital he defended, Abdallah had with a nod disposed of the lives of the inhabitants ; he had taken advantage of the darkness of night to assassinate his benefactor ; he had, from the ramparts of Acre, defied the arms of his enemy, and had laughed at his threats : in short, he had shown himself ferocious, cruel, ungrateful, insolent, in the days of his prosperity ; afterwards, at the first trials of adversity, abandoning the defence of the place to the courage of the valiant garrison, he had disgracefully hid himself in his harem. More disgracefully still, after begging his life and obtaining permission to appear before his conqueror, he had crowned his humiliation by lavishing on Ibrahim the names of saviour and father, and by servilely prostrating himself at his feet, to kiss his boot in testimony of gratitude. Such was the man whom I desired to see.

But, before I give you the particulars of my visit, you will not be displeased to learn how Abdallah was received

at Alexandria by Mehemet Ali, at the time of his landing. I subjoin a translation of the Italian bulletin, published on that occasion, and dated June 5th, 1832.

“ While Egypt, in the intoxication of the joy caused by the first intelligence of the reduction of Acre, taken by assault, and the submission of Abdallah Pacha, who had fallen into the hands of the conqueror, was anxiously awaiting the details of the achievement of the 27th of May last, a ship of war, belonging to his Highness the viceroy, appeared on the 2nd of June, at four in the afternoon, in sight of Alexandria, making known by her signals that she had on board a person of distinction, and firing guns at intervals as she approached. A boat was immediately despatched from the port to reconnoitre the ship, and to learn the object of her mission.

“ His Highness was at the naval arsenal. No sooner was the rumour circulated that the vessel was bringing the valiant Abdallah Pacha, than the eyes and the attention of the Alexandrians were fixed upon it. They could not, however, be sure of the arrival of Abdallah till the return of the boat; as there was reason to conjecture that she had on board an envoy from the camp of Acre, despatched at the same time as the first courier who had brought the news of the taking of that place.

“ The boat having approached the ship, the messenger under whose orders it was had a short conference with the captain, and immediately returned to the arsenal, where his Highness still was, and informed him that the ship was bringing Abdallah Pacha, with his kiaya, (lieutenant.)

“ His Highness inquired after their health; and

learning that Abdallah, who was a stranger to the great soul of the viceroy, was extremely uneasy, he immediately sent his own boat to fetch him, with directions to take him as well as his kiaya to the palace, whither he immediately repaired.

“As soon as he reached the staircase, his Highness despatched in the boat which had brought him to the arsenal Kengi Osman, paymaster-general of the navy, an acquaintance of Abdallah's, ordering him to go to meet him, to comfort him, and to assure him of the generosity of the viceroy. Mehemet Ali then proceeded with his retinue to the hall of the divan, and placed himself in the corner where he usually sits. On his angust countenance was remarked the expression of profound grief arising from compassion. He was a quarter of an hour without uttering a word; then breaking silence, he said: ‘I have been told that Abdallah is overwhelmed with fear, and I wish to comfort him. In consequence, and for this time only, dispensing with the strictness of the quarantine, I direct pratique to be given to this guest, that I may the sooner ease his agitated spirit.’

“Abdallah arrived at sun-set. At the moment of stepping on shore with his kiaya, he was complimented by some officers, who accompanied him at a slow pace to the palace. He walked with drooping head; and both his features and his demeanour showed great dejection. He is a spare man, of the ordinary stature; his beard is short, and of a chesnut brown; his eyes are animated, and his countenance fierce. He is about thirty-five. A long garment of blue cloth, in the form of a great

coat, similar to that worn by Europeans, and such as has been adopted by the army at Constantinople, covered his military dress. Round his head he had a Cachemir shawl carelessly arranged.

“ He ascended the staircase, and, having passed through the great saloon, where numerous spectators had assembled, he advanced towards the hall of audience, where the viceroy was seated. The apartments were magnificently lighted. When Abdallah appeared at the threshold of the door, Mehemet Ali rose, and looked at him with a smiling air, as if to encourage him to approach. Abdallah hastened to him, and, bowing his head, fell at his feet, and kissed the hem of the viceroy's garments.

“ ‘Forgive, your Highness,’ said Abdallah, in a faint voice, and scarcely able to repress his tears, ‘forgive my faults; and, since Heaven has endued your soul with the qualities of a sovereign, let your pardon be that of a sovereign, not that of a visir.’

“ Mehemet Ali extended his hand to him, raised him, and invited him to sit down on the divan by his side. In complying with the desire of the viceroy, Abdallah fell on his knees upon the divan before him. Mehemet soothed him by kind and paternal language: he assured him that he harboured not the least animosity, and that, forgetting the past, he considered him thenceforward as one of his sons. He made the kiaya sit down too. After coffee had been served, a pipe was handed to Abdallah; he at first refused it, but, being pressed by the viceroy, he at length took it.

“ After this affecting scene, his Highness made a sign



to those present to retire, and he remained in secret conference with Abdallah and the kiaya for half an hour.

“ A palace was assigned to Abdallah near that of his Highness, who desired him to go and lie down, and to come again to see him on the next and each succeeding day.

“ Abdallah retired with a serene countenance, accompanied by several persons of the court, and found at the door of the palace the horse of the viceroy himself, which had been prepared for him ; he asked if it was the same that Mehemet Ali rode. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, he kissed the saddle and mounted the horse, surrounded by several officers, who accompanied him on foot to the apartments destined for him, where he found a guard of honour.

“ The viceroy made a present to Abdallah of a handsome snuff-box, enriched with diamonds, and another in enamel, with a gold-hilted sabre.

“ Orders were then despatched to Cairo, to prepare a palace for the residence of Abdallah and his family, which was expected from Acre.

“ Throughout the scene which we have here described, Mehemet Ali displayed those noble and generous sentiments with which his great heart is endued. Clemency is one of the most glorious attributes of sovereigns, and Mehemet exhibited in all its lustre that virtue, which, combined with so many other eminent qualities that distinguish him, will render his name immortal in the annals of history.”

I had given Abdallah notice of my visit, and he had

replied that he should be delighted to make my acquaintance. I repaired to his residence, accompanied by our vice-consul, the chancellor, and a dragoman.

The palace inhabited by Abdallah is on the island of Roudah, about four hundred paces from that occupied by his harem. We had to cross the canal to reach it.

On our arrival, we found at the door about a score of slaves, some of whom had followed him hither, and the others been given to him by the viceroy. After making their obeisance, they introduced us, walking two and two before us. On reaching the divan, a young man of middling stature, elegantly though very simply dressed, advanced towards us : it was Abdallah. We should the less have supposed that it was he, because he had risen to receive us, an extraordinary and absolutely strange piece of politeness in a Turk, and still more in a pacha, who never rises to a Christian, be his rank what it may. He was extremely civil, laid his hand upon his heart, and made me sit down by his side. Immediately afterwards, refreshments were brought us, and pipes similar to the pacha's, a circumstance which I mention merely to show the very particular attention paid to our reception. Nevertheless, he appeared embarrassed : I was still more so. I was sure that among the numerous persons around us the government had some spies. The conversation was cold, constrained ; I measured every word. Abdallah never ceased repeating that he was infinitely obliged by my visit. Seeing that I spoke very little, and probably suspecting the motives of that reserve, he made a sign, and instantly all the attendants retired ; but I perceived that they stopped in an adjoining apartment.

When we were left alone with Abdallah, the conversation became a little more unrestrained. He spoke at great length concerning his misfortunes, in which we appeared to sympathize. He related them with composure, and in very moderate terms. We were astonished to hear him frequently give the name of father to Mehemet Ali. This affectation led us to imagine that he, too, was fearful of being overheard; for the conduct of this Mehemet, of whom he spoke in such a filial manner, was any thing but paternal. The viceroy was far from performing what he had promised. He had engaged to grant Abdallah provisions for his household, two palaces, and an appanage. He who disposes of all property in Egypt could be at no loss for palaces and provisions; but as for the appanage, he had no means of furnishing that but by drawing upon his treasurers; and when it came to the pinch, the generosity of the words only served to set off the avarice and the falsehood of the sentiments. The pacha has lost every thing: his household consists of more than a hundred persons, for whose various wants he is obliged to provide. No pecuniary assistance has been afforded him. He is obliged to sell every day some of his diamonds, some of the shawls of his women; he has no money but what he obtains from the desks of the brokers of Cairo—a resource which must soon be exhausted. But what is that now to Mehemet! Pleased to see his enemy at his feet, he at first deemed it serviceable to his policy to show him that sort of kindness by which the conqueror is not less flattered than the vanquished: he intended that Fame, when publishing his triumphs, should

also have to extol the loftiness of his character and his magnanimity. Now that his pride has what he desires, the rest is indifferent to him.

At the conclusion of our visit, Abdallah took from his bosom a bouquet of flowers, which he graciously presented to me as a mark of his esteem. He paid us the attention, unexampled among the Mussulmans, and the more surprising in him who has the reputation of detesting the Christians, to accompany us to the door, at the same time thanking us for the honour that we had done him. I wished him happier days, and strove to persuade him that they were not far distant. He paid particular attention to my words, which seemed to cheer him; and, to express the gratitude which they excited, he never ceased laying his hand upon his heart. I should have been touched and melted even to tears, if something frightful, something horrible, in his look had not constantly stifled within me the sentiments to which his language and manners gave birth. Never did I see such eyes as Abdallah's! They are the eyes of the captive tiger playing with his chain. They reminded me more than once in the course of the conversation of the hyena of Mount Carmel.

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### LETTER XLVIII.

ASSES AT CAIRO — MATARYEH, THE ANCIENT HELIOPOLIS — SYCAMORE, UNDER WHICH THE HOLY FAMILY RESTED — FOUNTAIN OF THE VIRGIN MARY — MONASTERY OF ST. SERGIUS — CAVERN IN WHICH THE HOLY FAMILY DWELT — THE NILOMETER — PALACE OF SCHOUBRA — SLAVE MARKET.

Cairo, February, 1st, 1833.

For some days after my arrival, I could not, though forewarned, conceive that in so large a city it would be

impossible to procure a vehicle of any kind, to carry me conveniently and more speedily to the different places that I wished to visit. Judging from what I myself at first felt, it must be no slight disappointment to a European, and to one of my age especially, not to be able to obtain either chariot, or cabriolet, or any thing at all like them. I have already told you, I believe, that, the horses being in general reserved for distinguished personages, for the Arabs, and for the cavalry, the others—and in this term ladies themselves are included—if they do not choose to go on foot, have no resource but asses; and I have been obliged to submit to the common lot. Fortunately, I find those animals much more convenient to ride than I could have imagined. Their number in Egypt is immense; and, for beauty, shape, intelligence, they are indisputably—take the expression, I beg of you, in the most favourable signification—the first asses in the world. Though I have seen many of them in every country, never did I meet with such in any.

The Egyptian ass possesses extraordinary spirit. His step is sure, his gait so easy as not to produce the slightest unpleasant movement, and, to crown his merits, he is indefatigable. I make long excursions with him on the trot, in full gallop, without his ever tiring. If, after thus running two or three full hours through the dust of the city, or the sands of the environs, I happen to alight for a moment, either out of curiosity or upon business, when I come back to him, I find him lively, looking proudly at me, pawing the ground, and, like the blood-horse, manifesting impatience to be gone. In short, my

friend, nothing can be more brisk, more active, more vigorous, more adroit, and were I not fearful of appearing ridiculous, I would say, more intelligent, than the ass of Cairo. But for that intelligence, twenty times already should I have got my head broken, or run the risk of being crushed among the crowd of camels and dromedaries, laden with enormous chests, and blocking up the narrow streets through which he was carrying me.

More grateful than the European, in spite of the civilization on which the latter piques himself, the inhabitant of Cairo can duly appreciate the services which he derives from the most despised, the worst used of domestic animals among us; and he rewards him by constant care and attention. He curries him, washes him, combs him, shaves his whole body in very hot weather, and supplies him with plenty of food. With the wealthy even he is an object of luxury, for which twelve or fifteen hundred francs are sometimes paid. To be sure, this is but the continuation of what has always been practised in the East; where, even in the time of the patriarchs, the ass was held in esteem and formed part of their riches.

One of my most interesting excursions since my last letter has been to visit Mataryeh, the ancient Heliopolis of Egypt, celebrated for its temple of the Sun, and still more for the abode of the holy Family there, when Joseph and Mary were obliged to flee from Judea, in order to save the infant Jesus from the sanguinary edicts of the cruel Herod. After having seen so many profane monuments, which, how worthy soever they may be in themselves of admiration on the score of the art,

frequently filled me with sad thoughts, by reminding me much less of the master-pieces of human genius than of the disgraceful and absurd superstitions of nations, it was cheering to direct my steps towards the places sanctified by my Saviour, and to behold fresh memorials, fresh monuments, of my faith. Mataryeh is but a league and a half from Cairo. M. Champion had the kindness to accompany me.

On approaching it, the first object that we perceived was an obelisk of red granite, of a single block, similar in form and height to Cleopatra's Needles. On one of the faces we saw a sculptured cross, which has given rise to various interpretations of the learned, and on the subject of which I could not obtain any precise information.

Mataryeh is but a mean village, where nothing is to be seen but huts and ruins. General Kleber immortalized himself by the famous battle fought there, in which he exterminated the army of the grand-visir, and thus ensured, for some time, the possession of Egypt to France.

The ancient city, on the site of which the village is built, was, according to the historians, one hundred and forty stadia in circumference. Its origin is lost in the darkness of the most remote antiquity. The Hebrews called it On, and the Greeks Heliopolis, city of the Sun, a name which occurs in Scripture. Aseneth, daughter of Potiphar, priest of the Sun, whom Pharaoh gave to wife to the patriarch Joseph, was a native of this place. The Jews who fled to Egypt, during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, were very numerous there in the time of Ptolemy Philometer. They obtained

from that prince permission to erect, not far from the place, a temple to the true God ; and exercised their worship there till the time of Vespasian, who ordered the Roman governor to destroy it.

Nothing is left of the famous temple of the Sun but ruins that are scarcely to be recognized, and that convey no idea of its magnificence. We know from Diodorus Siculus, that Sesostris caused two obelisks, one hundred and twenty cubits in height, and eight wide at the base, to be erected before this edifice. It was these that the emperor Augustus removed to Rome, after Egypt had been conquered and reduced to a Roman province. According to M. Champollion, Cleopatra's Needles also must originally have stood at the entrance of this same temple of Heliopolis, and been removed thence to Alexandria. That eminent scholar attributes their erection to Moeris, who, upon this supposition, must be the same as the Mespheus mentioned by Pliny, and adds that the inscriptions upon them were by Sesostris and his successor. In disputing these so positive assertions of Champollion's, well informed men appeal not only to the general silence of history, but to that of Diodorus Siculus in particular ; and, as they cannot make up their minds to believe that this historian, who, according to them, had visited Egypt, after noticing the obelisks of Sesostris at Heliopolis, should not have said a word concerning those of Moeris, if they had been standing at the same place, they class the new opinion among the conjectures, more or less obscure, more or less probable, of science. If I had a right to express my sentiments on a subject so foreign to my studies, you will easily guess to



which side I should be disposed to lean, from my respect for the profound erudition of one who has penetrated so far into the mysteries of the language of the Egyptian inscriptions.

At Mataryeh, there is to be seen an aged sycamore, which most strangers go to look at. It is dear to the Christians in particular, because, according to the tradition, the Holy Family, in its flight, rested in its shade. This sycamore, an object of general veneration in the East, stands in a large garden, or rather in a wood of orange-trees. Several branches have been apparently grafted upon its trunk, and are now of considerable size. It presents one of the most extraordinary phenomena of vegetation. Assisted by M. Champion, I measured its circumference, which is more than six fathoms. A great number of persons have taken pleasure in engraving their names upon this majestic tree, the aspect of which produces impressions the more profound, inasmuch as it reminds christian piety of circumstances the more capable of moving it: the persecution of a child by a tyrant, the maternal anguish of Mary, the alarm and anxiety of Joseph. We stopped some time to contemplate it, communicating our thoughts, and both of us admiring how, from the persecution to which the sight of this sycamore carries us back, down to these of the most recent times, weakness has miraculously triumphed over might, how innocence has constantly escaped the snares and the fury of all-powerful guilt, how terrible is the end of all persecutors, beginning with that Herod, whom his infamous flatterers surnamed the Great, whom the justice of Heaven doomed to rot alive,

and whose death the worms did not await to devour his greatness.

Before we retired, I broke off a few sprays from the hospitable tree, which I carried away as a precious relic.

Fifty paces farther, we saw the Virgin's fountain, which, according to tradition, is of miraculous origin. God caused it to issue from the bosom of the earth to refresh the infant Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, in a country parched by the sun, where the traveller suffers most from the heat and thirst. The water of this spring is sweet and agreeable ; that of all the others is brackish and ill-tasted. I am well aware that, if I were to relate this wonder to a philosopher, he would laugh at it. But what is there at which a philosopher does not laugh? I have known some who laughed even at the justice of God, almost like those wretched creatures who laugh at human justice, till it comes to their turn to appear before it, and to ascend the scaffold. For my part, without pretending that this statement deserves the same credit as if it were recorded in the sacred Scriptures, I cannot help discovering in the circumstance a connexion, a manifest relation, with preceding events. It seems so natural that God should do for his Son, for Mary, and for Joseph, what he had not disdained to do, through the medium of Moses at Mount Horeb, for a murmuring and ungrateful people ; and the idea of the Holy Family overcome with fatigue refreshing itself with the pure water of a spring, which it owed to the bounty of Him who had miraculously warned it by an angel to flee into Egypt, penetrates my heart so profoundly, that I cannot withstand the impulse which inclines me to believe it.

According to the same tradition that records the origin of the Virgin's fountain, the Holy Family, on leaving the sycamore, directed its course towards Memphis, and stopped at the place where Old Cairo now stands, where it remained till the death of Herod. The retreat where it secreted itself is in the monastery of St. Sergius, which is called Dair el Nassara, and which I have visited.

The area occupied by this monastery is very extensive. The walls, from their height and thickness, resemble those of a fortress. The church is small, mean, and has scarcely any ornament but a few lamps of glass or wood, suspended from the ceiling by cords. On each side of the high altar is a flight of a dozen steps, by which you descend to a subterraneous chapel or grotto, about twenty feet long, and twelve wide. There, it is said, dwelt Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Above the altar, in this chapel, is a very ancient picture, representing the Virgin on the left bank of the Nile. This picture closes the entrance to a second, smaller grotto, which the monks call the Oven, because it is somewhat in the form of one, and which belonged to this humble asylum. On beholding this gloomy abode, Bethlehem and Nazareth came into my mind ; I recollected that he who had taken refuge there predicted to his disciples that, not being above their master, they should, like him, suffer persecution ; and I felt a sort of Christian joy in considering that, even in our days, the divine prophecy has been fulfilled ; that in more than one place the caverns, in others the rocks, had afforded asylums against the persecutors ; that the persecuted had lived in peace till the

death of the Herods of their time, and had then gloriously issued from them, to continue a work that shall cease only at the gates of eternity.

On the morning of the 29th, I went a second time to the island of Roudah, to see the famous Mekias or Nilometer, which I had not had time to inspect, on the day when I paid my visit to Abdallah.

The Nilometer serves to show the height of the river. The Turks long concealed it from the curiosity of strangers : every thing concerning it was enveloped in a veil of mystery. It is merely an octagonal pillar of a single block of white, or rather yellowish, marble, like that of some of the antique columns, which are still to be met with in certain houses of Cairo. Its capital, of the Corinthian order, is gilt. It stands in the middle of a square basin or well, the bottom of which is level with the bed of the Nile. It is divided into Egyptian cubits ; and the Egyptian cubit is twenty fingers' breadth, which, reduced to our measure, is equal to twenty inches six lines. Over the well is a wooden dome, covered with yellow and blue paint, and with gilding in tolerable preservation. You descend into it by a flight of steps, at the bottom of which, when the water is low, you perceive small niches made in the wall, the purpose of which I could not learn.

The Nilometer formerly stood in a temple, dedicated to the god Serapis. The Mussulmans inclosed it in a mosque, which is now in ruins, and amidst the relics of which a powder manufactory has been established : it is guarded, day and night, by sentinels. Their orders, in regard to visitors, are extremely strict. I was without

arms; my janissary had his cane and his sabre: he was obliged to leave them at the door, lest one, striking against the other, should produce a spark and occasion some disastrous accident.

I availed myself of the afternoon to visit the summer palace which the viceroy has recently built at Schoubra, a small village, a league distant, on the banks of the Nile. The avenue leading to it is worthy of a royal residence. The gardens, though in a rather Turkish taste, are magnificent: one part of them is reserved for the exotic plants which Mehemet cultivates, and which he hopes to naturalize in Egypt. In the centre stands a building of white marble, of prodigious extent, within which is a basin likewise of marble, so spacious that numerous boats can pass to and fro, in all directions, without running foul of one another. Around it run elegant galleries, at the four corners of which are large halls and divans, fitted up with the most costly decorations. Marble lions and crocodiles, of admirable workmanship, spout water incessantly from their nostrils into the kind of lake formed by this reservoir, and keep it always at the same height. At night, numberless lamps of alabaster illumine the scene and render it still more delightful. To the gardens adjoins a park not less remarkable, in which are collected a great many foreign animals, and among the rest a superb opossum, a present from the king of England.

Enchanted as I was with what I had just beheld, the scene which I had before me, as I returned to Cairo, made me almost forget it. The weather was fine; the evening breeze cooled the air. The trees of the alley leading to the city were peopled with birds which flut-

tered among their boughs, and celebrated the close of day with an extraordinary chirping and warbling; a multitude of boats, going up and down, covered the Nile; the country refreshed the eye by the beautiful verdure with which, on that side, it is carpeted; numbers of cattle were grazing in it; the banks of the river, bordered with palaces, pleasure-houses, manufactories, in their turn attracted my eye, which, ranging from them to the Mokatum, the desert and its gigantic mausoleums in the distance, brought back my thoughts to serious meditations.

Next day I visited the slave-market, accompanied by the Austrian consul. I shuddered beforehand at the idea of what I was to see — man making a barbarous and shameful traffic of his fellow-man — selling him, to become whatever it suits the convenience, perhaps whatever it pleases the infamous caprices, of another to make him. As I approached the bazaar where this detestable trade is carried on, I was overpowered by feelings not to be described, an inexpressible mixture of horror and pity: methought I had already before my eyes the greedy dealer, wholly engrossed with the success of his iniquitous speculations, and coolly calculating the profits of them; the wary purchaser, disputing about the value of the commodity to obtain an abatement; and the hapless victim uttering cries of grief, which found no access either to the soul of him who called himself the master, or his who was about to become so. On entering, I saw about a score of negresses seated on the ground, the eldest of them scarcely twenty years of age. Deep dejection marked their countenances; one only smiled while ar-

ranging the hair of a companion ; another had a child, about two years old, in her arms. Nothing could be more interesting than this little negro, who was playing with his mother's large silver ear-rings. I should have looked in vain for men among the slaves exposed for sale : the viceroy had appropriated them all to himself, and made soldiers of them.

The Abyssinian women are of a sallow complexion ; they are reputed to be more valuable than the negresses. They are in the vestibules ; these have an iron gate, between the bars of which you may see them. As for the white slaves, Christians are not allowed either to see or to buy them.

Most of the black slaves of both sexes come from Kordofan, Sennaar, and Darfour. The caravans bring them by thousands, tearing them without pity from their country, from their dearest affections ; answering their cries, their tears, their entreaties, only by force and violence. The sufferings of these wretched creatures, in crossing the desert in such numbers, are inconceivable ; mothers and young girls, dropping from fatigue, are left upon the road, stretched on the scorching sand ; there they expire, cursing their murderers, and their blanched bones are soon trodden under foot by other barbarians conducting fresh victims to Cairo.

There are none of these hapless people but regret their country, and manifest profound grief at being for ever separated from it. But those who feel their lot most keenly are the blacks from Darfour. Endued with more sensibility than the others, they frequently cannot refrain from loudly deploring the loss of all that is dear to them,

and by such complaints they draw upon themselves still harsher treatment.

I was wholly absorbed by the gloomy reflexions which the first impressions had awakened in my mind, when M. Champion directed my attention to a female slave, clad in dirty rags, who was brought to the middle of the bazaar, to be sold by auction. On seeing the bidders, to whose examination she was subjected, open her mouth, look at her teeth, make her walk, and so forth, "Let us go! let us go!" said I to the vice-consul, shuddering with horror and indignation; and, seizing him by the arm, I hastily retired with him.

Here, as in Europe, you are sure to be told that the negro, when once bought, is treated like a child of the house into which he is introduced, rather than like a slave; that sometimes it so happens that he becomes the confidant, the friend, of his master; that he at length obtains his liberty in reward for his services: and it is further said that, if he is ill-treated, it is sufficient for him to say to his owner, "Take me back to the market," to oblige the latter to sell him again. But I should like those who advance such assertions to lay their hands upon their hearts and say, if it is really from a feeling of that pretended philanthropy, of which they make such a parade, that the seller tears the unhappy blacks from their families and from their country, and that the buyer, in his turn, purchases them; or if it is not evidently on both sides a speculation of sordid interest, of hideous avarice, which, calculating the value of the human being like that of the brute beast, confounds him with the animals, and leaves us in doubt whether it would hesitate to



rip up his bowels if it were sure to find gold in them. I should like them to name a single wealthy Egyptian who has listened to the complaints of a slave whom he has ill used, and sent him back to the market; to mention a single slave, in whom all the feelings of nature were not utterly extinguished, who has refused to exchange the happiness of slavery for that of returning to the country which gave him birth, were he doomed to find there no other subsistence but the dates hanging from the palm-tree beneath which his mother used to repose with him.

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LETTER XLIX.

FOREST OF PALM-TREES—RUINS OF MEMPHIS—COLOSSAL STATUE OF SESOSTRIS—SAKARA—FIELD OF MUMMIES—PYRAMIDS OF SAKARA—GISEH—SPHYNX—PYRAMIDS OF CHEOPS, CHEPHREN, AND MYCERINUS.

Cairo, February 8th, 1833.

The weather in the winter season, generally very fine here, has this year been so bad that, though I have been a month at Cairo, it has not been possible for me to set out for Mount Sinai. The different persons with whom I have intercourse have unanimously urged me to defer my departure, assuring me that the rains which have hitherto prevented it, and which still continue, would oppose almost insurmountable difficulties to my journey. Being compelled to stay a few days longer, I availed myself of this interval to go at once to see the pyramids of Sakara and Giseh, which I had intended not to visit till my return.

Very early on the 2nd, I set out for Old Cairo with the consul, whose attentions to me are unbounded, and two of his friends. We crossed the Nile opposite to Giseh,

at a point where that river is very wide and dangerous. Our beasts were put on board a boat with one sail.

On landing, we turned to the left, leaving on our right the desert of the Pyramids, which, though three leagues distant, appeared close to us. We had before us those of Sakara, and beyond them those of Darchour. Our plan was to sleep at Sakara, after visiting the ruins of Memphis, deferring our excursion to the desert and to the pyramids of Giseh till the following day.

The country through which we passed was magnificent. Fields of flax, barley, lentils, beans, wheat, &c., made us admire the luxuriance of the vegetation. Farther off, numbers of cattle were grazing in the meadows, where the grass, of every tint of green, was so high as to hide great part of their bodies from our view. Beyond these, we entered the desert where this beautiful nature terminates : it is death by the side of life. We passed through villages very agreeably situated, but almost destitute of inhabitants. A few women, children, and aged men constitute the population left there by Mehemet Ali ; all who are capable of bearing arms have been carried off to swell the ranks of his army.

After a ride of three hours, we entered a vast forest of palm-trees, at the extremity of which we came in sight of the spot where stood the ancient capital of Egypt ; which it was easy for us to recognize from the description given of it by travellers, and from the heaps of rubbish that are met with here and there upon an area several leagues in circumference.

Memphis, after the decline of Thebes, became the capital of Egypt. The residence of Pharaoh, its im-

mense population, its palaces, its public buildings, its temples, its monuments of all kinds, both sacred and profane, the numerous canals, through which run the waters of the Nile, its opulence, its arts, the genius of its sovereigns, the learning of its priests, the wisdom of its police, the renown of its laws and its institutions, all contributed to ensure it the highest rank in the pagan world, and to promise it a perpetual duration. But Memphis, intoxicated with its prosperity, fancied itself omnipotent. With its vain superstitions and its idols, it excited the wrath of the God who had given Joseph as minister to one of its Pharaohs : ungrateful, it had persecuted and oppressed the people of Israel, and it was decreed that the anathema pronounced against it through the medium of Ezekiel should be fulfilled :—

“ Thus saith the Lord : They that uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down I will destroy their idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph, (Memphis) Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt ; and they shall know that I am the Lord.” (Ezek. xxx.)

For many centuries past, down to this day, nothing is left of a city so great, so mighty, so honoured among the nations, but the ruins that we had before our eyes.

The most considerable are near the village of Mit-Rahineh. In certain places they lie in heaps, covered with dust, and remind you the more sadly of the nothingness of all human grandeur, from a sort of resemblance which they bear to the mounds of earth raised by the gravedigger over the remains of the dead. In passing through them, we paused at several blocks,

unable to make out what could have been their destination. We came to a colossal statue, which is generally admitted to be that of Sesostris mentioned by Herodotus. This statue, of a single piece of granite, thirty cubits in length, is near the spot where stood the temple of Vulcan, one of the most magnificent in Egypt : it is thrown down with the face to the ground. The legs are broken, and part of them gone. The other portion is in perfect preservation, and so entire, that you would be tempted to believe the work to be fresh from the hands of the sculptor. The expression of the head is remarkable for the grace and beauty of the features. It is all that is left in the city where reigned the most illustrious of conquerors, whose name filled the world, to commemorate his glory ; that glory which, in the extravagance of his pride, man places in making himself talked of, in subjecting to his dominion a great number of provinces by arms and by violence, and in making millions miserable. A mutilated statue, a proud and haughty head, which more strikingly records the talent of the artist by whom it was executed, than the features and the exploits of his model—that head, bowed more ignominiously to the ground than were those of the conquered monarchs and princes whom the victor harnessed to his car—this is all that time has spared of the king of kings, of the lord of lords, as he ordered himself to be called. Bending over this wreck, I examined it in pensive silence. Though, in the course of a life chequered with strange vicissitudes, it has been my lot to witness the most astonishing scenes of a spectacle where human vanity rose to such a height that for a while it seemed to fancy itself the absolute

arbiter of the destinies of the world ; though, after at least dragging at its car, if not harnessing to it, pontiffs and kings, it fell before my face, suddenly and like a mass of lead, into the abyss ; yet never was I so powerfully struck by the nothingness of the things of this world, never did I admire with deeper feeling the inscrutable ways of Providence, than in presence of this colossus, which I found overthrown before the ruins of a temple that has disappeared, and on the site of a city which, out of all the monuments of its splendour and magnificence, has transmitted to us nothing save a few mostly shapeless stones and a little dust.

We reached Sakara towards evening, and passed the night there.

Sakara, on the left bank of the Nile, contained, it is said, eighteen thousand inhabitants during the reign of the Mamelukes ; now it is but a village, numbering scarcely three thousand. The principal occupation of the peasants is searching for mummies, or embalmed bodies of the ancient Egyptians, which have for some centuries formed an important branch of trade with the Europeans. The plain of Sakara, in which these bodies are found, was the necropolis of the south of Memphis. That part of the plain where they are discovered in the greatest number, is nearly a league from the village ; it is now known by the name of the Field of the Mummies. To one who retains any feeling of the respect due to the dead, it presents a sad and painful scene. Here and there you meet with ruins of tombs, small vessels of earth or glass, heads, idols, torn bits of stuff, and other things, which bespeak the ravages of a sacrilegious lust

of gain. If you penetrate into the catacombs situated beneath the sands of the desert, it is much worse. Beneath these sands run in various directions long vaults, mostly hewn out of the rock, and in the sides of which are formed niches destined to receive corpses. You descend into them by shafts of considerable depth, by means of a rope, or by gently sloping descents. The traveller who enters these subterranean depositories cannot stir a step without perceiving traces of the most odious profanation---parts, sometimes considerable, of broken mummies, bones, fragments of the winding sheets which in numerous folds enwrapped the bodies, fillets, bits of wood from the coffins, matters used for embalming, &c. It is now rare to find a place of sepulture that has not been violated. The stranger most shocked by this unworthy violation, teased by the Arab, who sees in it nothing but a source of gain, at length becomes the purchaser of these relics, and in his turn merely regards them as an object of antiquity. As for myself, I must confess, my dear friend, that I yielded, not without some scruples, to the temptation. I bought of a Bedouin several small idols of baked clay, and of rude workmanship, which he had abstracted from these sepulchres.

The pyramids of Sakara are numerous. A league beyond Old Cairo, we had distinguished nine; on the spot we discovered eight more, of smaller dimensions. The height of the plateau, upon which they stand, is estimated at about fifteen feet above the plain. Some are of brick, others of stone, but all of them of rude construction, and in no wise remarkable.

The highest, built of brick, and of large dimensions,

is much dilapidated: its base, we are assured, is eight hundred feet round. In 1821, Count de Minutoli, a Prussian general, had it opened. He discovered in it long subterraneous vaults, numerous corridors, vast halls, chambers whose walls are covered with hieroglyphics, and a sort of sanctuary, the destination of which is unknown. The sand, with which the wind has since blocked up the entrance, forbids all access to it without new labours equally tedious and expensive.

The second of the pyramids is still more ruinous than the preceding. Pietro della Valle, the pilgrim, who entered it at the beginning of the seventeenth century, gives the following account of it:—

“At the foot of the descent, we had not to mount, as in the outer pyramid; we found ourselves at once in the sepulchral chamber, which is very large and very lofty. The roof is not horizontal, as in the other, but it keeps gradually diminishing to an angle towards the top. From this chamber you pass by a small and very low doorway into a similar chamber, of the same dimensions and structure; for the pyramid was, probably, built for more than one person. But in neither of them did I find any tomb: there cannot have been any, or they must have been destroyed since. It is very true that in the second chamber you see a very lofty doorway placed between the marbles, and, on throwing a stone into it, I observed that it went very far; but the height is such that it would require a long ladder to reach the top. Some persons of the country said that the tomb is in this third chamber: I cannot tell, as I have not seen it, but it may be so. The corpse may, perhaps, have been put

there that it might be more secure, on account of the difficulty of getting at it.”*

The other pyramids of Sakara, scattered over a vast space, scarcely attract the notice of travellers. Science long had nothing but probabilities and conjectures to determine to what period and to what persons these monuments belong. From the discoveries of M. Champollion, it is now considered as certain that they were erected under the third dynasty, and that they are the most ancient in the known world.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, we resumed our route. After riding nearly an hour, sometimes amidst well cultivated lands, sometimes along a high dyke, which serves for a road during the inundation, we arrived at the entrance of the desert, which at this point begins two leagues from the pyramids of Giseh, that we were going to visit. Unluckily, the weather, which till then had been brilliant, suddenly changed. A cold wind arose, and blew with such violence, that one of our companions was nearly overthrown. In order to withstand it, we were obliged to keep close together with our guides by our sides. The traces of our steps disappeared the very moment they were printed upon the ground; the sand flew and covered us. Though lofty as mountains, the pyramids were shrouded from our view; every thing about us was drowned in an ocean of dust. Not till an hour had elapsed, did we begin to catch a glimpse of those monuments as through a veil. Presently afterwards, the sun breaking through the clouds, they sud-

* Viaggi di Pietro della Valle, lett. 2. del Cairo, del 25 gennajo, 1616.

denly presented themselves so distinctly, as to make us believe that we were close to them, though we were still at least half a league off. At length we reached the plateau on which they stand.

We had been ascending for ten minutes the hill leading to them, when we perceived the famous Sphynx, and hastened up to it. We could see nothing but the head, the neck, and part of the back : the rest of it is buried in the sand.

This monstrous statue is of a single block, which, we are told, forms part of the rock that it stands upon. It has been remarked, however, that the colour differs : it is of a deep yellow ; but as this difference does not exist in the fractured places, it has been concluded that this colossus was at first painted by the Egyptians.

The bulk and the prodigious length of the head and neck had long led to the conclusion, that the dimensions of the entire colossus must be enormous. It was doubtful, however, that they were so large as they are stated to be by Pliny, who asserts that, from the top of the forehead to the bottom of the belly, it measures one hundred and seventy-two feet. The excavations recently made under the direction of M. Caviglia, formerly a naval officer, have proved that there is no exaggeration in this account, and put an end to all uncertainty. He had the patience and perseverance to clear the forepart of the Sphynx down to its base. The gigantic proportions of the statue have been ascertained, and it is now known that it represents a monster, half man, half lion, the paws of which rest upon the rock, and extend fifty feet beyond the body. On the second claw of the left fore-foot has

been found a Greek inscription, with the name of Arrian, the historian of Alexander ; between the feet a block of granite, on which are represented two small sphynxes, in relievo ; and near it a small sanctuary in ruins. It is deeply to be regretted that the encroachments of the sand have again intercepted this astonishing object from the curiosity of the traveller.

The parts that continue uncovered are much damaged, especially the head : it is generally admitted, however, that it has an Ethiopian countenance. Persons who have ascended to the top of the head assert that they have found there an aperture fifteen or sixteen inches in diameter, and that it is the outlet of a hole nine feet long, formed in the interior of the statue ; they add that its depth cannot be precisely ascertained, on account of the quantity of stones that have been thrown into it. As Giseh was the second necropolis of Memphis, several of the learned have conjectured that the Sphynx was its tutelar deity, that oracles were delivered there, and that the priests introduced themselves into the interior, and so lent it their voice. Others, founding their opinion on certain ancient traditions, and on the very position of the statue, which looks towards the Nile, imagine that it was merely destined to indicate the overflowing of the river. It is also a very common opinion, but which appears to be as yet unsupported by any solid reasons, that it communicates by means of subterranean cavities with the highest of the pyramids.

Having satisfied our curiosity respecting the Sphynx, we proceeded towards the last-mentioned monuments, which are not far from it. I have told you what an impression

the distinct view of them produced on my mind. When close to them, my eye measured them, I may say, without astonishment, without surprise. The only thing that struck me was the excessive disproportion between these gigantic masses and what they were destined to cover. Their prodigious height, their enormous bulk, those rocks piled upon rocks, bearing all their weight upon a handful of dust—much less than this would have been sufficient to awake in my mind thoughts which would never have been suggested by all that I had read, by all that I had seen, most fit to convince me of the littleness, the pitifulness, the nothingness, of man. Inexpressible feelings succeeded each other in my soul. The vilest insect living beneath the stones of one of these tombs might, methought, boast with more reason of enjoying it than he who, after exhausting his skill and his treasures, the treasures and the lives of his subjects, in its erection, had said, in the delirium of his pride: “It is for me!”

The pyramids of Giseh are very numerous: there are nearly fifty, of unequal size. They are alike in this, that all of them are placed, with a very slight deviation, towards the four cardinal points. The three largest are those which have hitherto been designated, after the ancient historians, particularly Herodotus, by the name of Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerinus; and which M. Champollion asserts to be the tombs of the first three kings of the fifth dynasty, Souphi I., Sensaouphi, and Mankeri.

These pyramids stand upon a rock, the plateau of which rises towards the north, and gradually declines, especially on the west towards the desert. The height

of this rock above the plain has been variously estimated by historians and travellers. The ancients suppose it to be about one hundred feet; some of the moderns reduce it to sixty-three; still more recently it has been computed at fifty. As, at a distance, the rock seems to form but one mass with the piles which it supports, perhaps it is to this cause, at least in part, that we must attribute the kind of illusion by which they appear to the observer, placed at a great distance, like mountains whose tops are lost in the clouds; whereas, when he is close to them, they seem to lower themselves, as it were, to bring their summits within the reach of his eye—a fresh illusion, favoured by the prodigious dimensions of the base, which tend to diminish the apparent height of the monuments.

Their real height was not accurately known till the measurements made by the *savants*, who accompanied the French army at the time of Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt. It is now known that the pyramid of Cheops, which some travellers stated to be four hundred and eighty feet, and others five hundred and twenty, is, in reality, four hundred and eighty-eight feet six inches; that of Chephren, three hundred and ninety-eight; and that of Mycerinus, one hundred and sixty-three.

It was long believed that, according to Herodotus, the stones used for building the pyramids were brought thither from a great distance; there is now no doubt that all of them, excepting the marbles or granites, with which they were lined, were extracted from the very spot on which they stand; and from quarries in the neighbouring Lybian mountains. An accurate analysis

of the materials, made by the most eminent men of science in France, leaves not the least uncertainty on that head. It is now known that the principal stones are calcareous, fine-grained, of a light grey, easy to cut, and resembling, in their nature, those of the quarries of the country ; and that those which formed the magnificent linings of the pyramids of Cheops and Mycerinus, and were removed from the former many centuries ago, from the latter very recently, were Ethiopian jasper, and the beautiful rose-coloured granite of the island of Elephantia.

It is easy to conceive that such structures must have required an immense expenditure of time, hands, and money. To form an idea, merely an approximative one, on this subject, we have but the testimony of the Greek historian, whom we are always obliged to quote on the subject of ancient Egypt, and that of Pliny, who, coming after him, only repeated his statements. "There was engraved," said Herodotus, "on one of the faces of the great pyramid, in Egyptian characters, how much had been expended merely for garlic, leeks, and onions. The person who interpreted this inscription told me that the sum amounted to sixteen hundred talents, (four million and a half of francs, French money.) If this be correct, how much must it have cost for the rest of the food of the labourers, for their clothing, for iron implements," &c. One hundred thousand labourers, he adds, were continually engaged in the work ; they were relieved every three months by a like number ; and yet, the pyramid alone, without including the construction of the dyke, was not finished in less than twenty years.

It was at this great pyramid that we stopped longest. Like all the travellers who come to the desert, we walked round it, not without difficulty, sometimes over rubbish, at others, upon a fine sand, into which our feet sunk at every step.

Two entrances lead to the interior ; one near the western angle, and, at about two-thirds of its height, introduces you into a small square chamber, in a corner of which is to be seen a sort of well, the outlet of which is not known ; this entrance has long been abandoned. The other looks towards the north, and is sixty feet above the base ; it is by this that all those who explore the monument enter. We were, at first, disposed, from a movement of curiosity, to go in, but reflexion soon dissuaded us from the undertaking. Weary as we already were, what should we have gained by fatiguing ourselves still more in gloomy labyrinths, most of which you cannot pass through without stooping or crawling, by the light of torches, which the fall of the least substance, or the wing of a bat, is liable to extinguish ; in narrow passages, which, after incredible difficulty, after endless turnings and windings, only bring you at last to an empty sepulchre, to two naked halls or chambers, which have nothing remarkable but their names, the king's chamber, and the queen's chamber ; to return with the same labour, the same difficulty, the same danger, and to leave at last, with garments torn or soiled by contact with the ground or the walls, pallid face, and lungs oppressed by the want of fresh air !

To the satisfaction of exploring the interior of the Cheops, I should certainly have preferred that of ascend-

ing to the platform in which it terminates. It would have been to me far more interesting to contemplate, from that elevation, the rich and fertile Egypt, the numberless windings of its river, and that multitude of canals which distribute its fertilizing waters over the whole face of the country ; above all, to survey the extensive ruins of Memphis ; those cities of the dead, where so many ancient generations were buried ; those deserts which surround without protecting their remains ; and that populous city, which, at this day, a modern Pharaoh crushes with the weight of his ambition, his avarice, and his pride.

I thought that at this height my soul, more at liberty, would have soared more impetuously towards the skies, and drawn from them new and more wholesome inspirations ; that, beholding at my feet the royal ashes of so many dynasties, that hovering over, as it were, and looking down upon their glory, I should the better have felt and comprehended its vanity ; and that then I should have descended with better thoughts, with a heart more detached from the things of this world, more aware of the illusions of all that is passing, more firmly resolved to seek its glory in the glory of Him who alone can associate it with his happiness and his eternity.

But, after some observations of our guides, we thought it better to renounce an enterprize, the execution of which is not only very laborious, but full of danger, especially as the wind was blowing with violence. Many of the stones which form the steps of the monument are broken ; some, more deeply penetrated by the action of the sun's rays, are in a state of decomposition ; others,

less solidly united, give way under the foot as you ascend, tumble down whole or in fragments, and, unless great care be taken, are liable to occasion fatal accidents. It is not long since an English traveller lost his life there. On arriving at a certain height, he slipped backward, and was dead when he came to the foot of the pyramid.

The second pyramid, that of Chephren, is about five hundred paces from the preceding, and nearly equal to it in height. It differs from it in its top, which terminates in a point, and still more in its base, the cube of which is much smaller. The lower part, now covered with sand and rubbish, is, according to Herodotus, of Ethiopian stones of various colours, which form a kind of pedestal. The rest, from the first tier, was entirely covered with smooth and polished stone ; of this covering a very small portion remains, down to about forty feet below the top. M. Belzoni, who, some years since, penetrated into the interior, having with great labour and difficulty reached the principal chamber, found there a large sarcophagus, containing a quantity of bones, which, on being examined by skilful English anatomists, were declared to be those of an ox. Hence it was concluded, and, probably, very justly, that these remains had belonged to some god Apis, and that this deity had shared the honours of royal sepulture with the Pharaohs.

I shall say but a word concerning the third pyramid—that of Mycerinus. Built externally on the plan of that of Cheops, it was covered with a red granite of Elephantia, of the same species as that of most of the Egyptian obelisks. The greediness of the Arabs has prompted them to carry off the stones of this facing, either to sell

or to adorn their edifices with them. Fragments of them are still to be found in great number, at the base of this monument.

LETTER L.

CITADEL, WHERE THE PACHA RESIDES — KLEBER'S TOMB — JOSEPH'S WELL — SQUARE OF THE ESSEKYEH — ASSASSINATION OF KLEBER — AHMET BEY DEFTERDAR; HIS CRUELTY — ISHMAEL PACHA.

Cairo, February 12th, 1833.

According to all appearance, I shall pass but a few days more at Cairo. The weather has become finer, my preparations are nearly completed, and, if nothing happens to derange my plans, I shall set out as soon as I can.

Since my last letter, my principal visits have been to the citadel, where the pacha resides, and the tomb of Kleber.

The citadel, to the north-east of Grand Cairo, is here called El Kala : it is a work of the great Saladin's, who built it at the time when he wrested the sovereignty of Egypt from the Fatimite caliphs. It stands upon a rock, which is a prolongation of the Mokatam. Its high walls are encompassed at a little distance with houses, which are mostly falling to ruin, and some of them deserted. Going thither from the city, you find at the entrance a spacious area, the surface of which is the rock itself. This entrance is an enormous folding door, strengthened with iron, flanked by two towers, painted outside in red and white stripes, like the interior of the mosques and the principal edifices. The streets through

which you ascend are narrower than those of Cairo, and have been cut out of the rock : the acclivity is extremely steep. In some places steps have been made to facilitate the ascent.

In advancing, in a north-east direction, you come to the remains of a square edifice, the walls of which were still standing at the time of the French invasion. It was open at top ; its tallest columns were of granite, and of a single block. On the upper part of some of the smallest were remarked, not without surprise, four fleurs-de-lis of very large dimensions, the discovery of which has given rise to singular conjectures. They have led certain writers to think it probable that the kings of France derived their armorial bearings from Egypt. Of this edifice nothing is now left but the columns and ruins. It was, according to some, an ancient temple ; according to others, a palace, which the Arabs attribute to Joseph, but which may have been erected by Saladin, whose name is said to have been found there.

Ascending nearly direct north from these ruins, you come to the great mosque of the citadel ; and a little higher, to Joseph's well, which is its most remarkable monument.

This well has long been reputed of the highest antiquity. The honour of it was given to the patriarch whose name it bears, and it was thought that the style and the workmanship of the early Egyptians might be discovered in it. Rollin reckons it among the curiosities of ancient Egypt. At the present day, the best judges have no doubt that it is a work of Saladin's, who, it is said, caused it to be constructed that he might have near

his residence a spring of less brackish water than that which had been previously used for ordinary purposes. It is hewn from top to bottom out of the rock. It is two hundred and sixty-nine feet deep, divided into two parts by a reservoir, around which runs a platform. The descent to it is by a flight of low steps, about seven or eight feet broad. An hydraulic machine, composed of two cog-wheels, one of which, horizontal, catches in the other that is vertical, and provided at distances of six feet with small buckets or earthen pots, lifts the water from the bottom of the reservoir. It is afterwards raised to the top by means of a similar machine, and thence conveyed by pipes to different parts of the citadel. In both machines, the first wheel, which sets the second in motion, is worked by oxen, frequently by a buffalo, and sometimes by a camel. Having asked permission to go down into it, the sentry on duty at first refused, upon pretext that a few days before a pilgrim had been murdered there; but a *bakschish* was sufficient to make him as complaisant as I could wish.

The pacha's palace is at the southern extremity of the citadel, and backed almost against the walls of the rampart: there is nothing magnificent in it but the great hall in which the divan is held. The other apartments are inferior both in beauty and dimensions to those in some of the palaces of Cairo.

The name of Kleber is so renowned in the East, that general raised the military glory of the French to such a height, and his end was so tragical, that I should have reproached myself, had I neglected to visit the places which more particularly commemorate him—the square

of the Esbekyeh, where he was assassinated, and the spot where his mortal remains were deposited.

The Esbekyeh, the most spacious of the great open places of Cairo, communicates by a canal with the Nile, whose waters cover it at the time of the inundation and fill the cisterns. It is irregularly planted with sycamores, which afford an agreeable shade, and form pleasant walks. When the Nile has retired, the ground is tilled and sown; and, till harvest-time, there are only paths trodden at random by the inhabitants, who are not deprived of the privilege of walking there. It is bordered by handsome houses, belonging to persons of the highest distinction. Bonaparte, on making himself master of the city, fixed his quarters in one of these houses, that of Elfy Bey, and had a garden laid out in the most agreeable manner; to this was joined a gallery, which looked towards the place. After his return to France, the house continued to be the head-quarters, and it was in the gallery that Kleber received the wound of which he died.

The companions in arms of the unfortunate general paid to his remains all the funeral honours which their situation in Egypt permitted. He was buried in one of the demi-bastions of the horned works, which the French had thrown up about the country-house of Ibrahim Bey, situated on one of the little branches of the Nile. This spot is to this day called Kleber's tomb, though there is no monument to perpetuate his memory.

I was here shown a circumstantial account of the crime which deprived the French army of its illustrious commander, and of the punishment inflicted on the perpe-

trator. I subjoin an extract from it. You will there see, not without shuddering, to what a degree of exaltation Mussulman fanaticism was carried, and all the extravagance of the vengeance which it inspired. The facts are related by M. Ader, an eye-witness.

“ The grand-visir, after his defeat at Heliopolis, his heart bursting with shame and rage at being obliged to return to Syria, hastened to publish papers in which the commander of the French army was represented as a man of no faith, a destroyer of all religion. In the name of Mahomet and the Koran, the minister summoned all good Mussulmans to the holy combat; he reminded them that heaven awaits those who put to death infidels, and he promised, moreover, his protection and earthly rewards to any one who should despatch the commander of the Christians in Egypt. This appeal to fanaticism was successful : a *seide* soon came forward.

“ Soleyman el Habbi was remarkable for ardent piety. About twenty-four years of age, he was a prey to profound melancholy, kept up in his soul by religious fanaticism. The ‘ holy combat ’ opened to him the gates of heaven : he did not hesitate to devote himself, and received from the hands of the agents of the grand-visir a dagger wherewith to consummate the glorious sacrifice. He was also furnished with money, a dromedary for the journey, and letters of recommendation, destined to procure him an asylum and abettors in Cairo : this asylum was a mosque ; these abettors, the persons officiating there. Thus it was a temple to which this wretched young man came to confirm himself in his horrible design, and to mature its execution. Three ulemas, or

chiefs of the Mussulman law, were in the secret ; instead of dissuading him from his crime, they only excited in his heart a still greater thirst for infidel blood ; they showed him in paradise the palm of murder. For a month Soleyman prepared himself for the ' holy combat,' by fasting and prayer ! he daily followed his victim, attentively studied his habits, made himself familiar with the head-quarters ; at length he had no more to do but to find a suitable opportunity, and chance offered it but too soon to his sacrilegious desires.

"Kleber had been residing for some time at Gizeh ; he lived in Mourad Bey's country-house there, while that which he usually occupied in Cairo was repairing.

"On the 14th of June, after holding a review in the island of Roudah, he entered the capital, and went to General Damas, the chief of his staff, to ask him for a breakfast. Several superior officers, members of the institute and heads of the administration, were present at this repast, during which the general appeared very cheerful. On rising from the table, he drew Protain, the architect, aside, and proposed to him to go to the head-quarters, that he might consult him about the repairs requisite there. Kleber's house was contiguous to that of Damas. As he was passing through the gallery between the two buildings, a man, meanly attired, taking advantage of a moment when the architect was at some distance, approached the general, prostrated himself with feigned humility, and seemed to wish to present a petition to him. Kleber, moved by the wretched look of the suppliant, advanced, and stooped towards him. Soleyman, quickly rising, drew a dagger, and plunged

it into the heart of his victim. The general fell, crying, 'I am murdered!' Protain ran up, seized the murderer, and would have secured him, but Soleyman gave him six wounds with the dagger, and threw him down. He then returned to Kleber, and inflicted three more wounds—a useless precaution, for the unfortunate warrior could not survive the first stroke.

“The gallery in which this atrocity was perpetrated looks out upon the place of the Esbekyeh. A guide who was passing at the moment when the general exclaimed, 'I am murdered,' ran affrighted to the house of General Damas, and thrilled with horror the rest of the breakfast party, which had not yet separated, by reporting this exclamation. They rose in disorder, and hastened to the victim, whom they found weltering in his blood, and deprived even of the comfort of being sensible of the attentions of friendship. Kleber still breathed, but all the efforts of art proved of no avail, and the army of Egypt was soon deprived of the conqueror of Heliopolis.

“Meanwhile, a strict search was made, and the Mamelukes themselves, who were better acquainted with the localities than the French, assisted them in it. Protain, on coming to himself, had given a description of the murderer. Upon these indications, they set at liberty a sheik, remarkable for his hatred of the French, to whom their suspicions pointed. At length, in the gardens belonging to the head-quarters, under a thick spreading nopal, Soleyman was discovered. Though Protain declared that he was the man; though several persons asserted that they had seen him lurking about the places frequented by the victim; though the bloody

dagger, found secreted upon him, was shown to him; still the wretch, pressed with questions and proofs, persisted in denying his guilt; and before they could draw a confession from his lips, they were obliged to apply the bastinado, after the manner of the East. They then learned with horror the instigations of Jussuf Pacha.

“A military commission was appointed to try Soleyman and the ulemas of the mosque of El Hassan, whom he had denounced as his accomplices. Three of these ministers were apprehended. Confounded by the declarations and the reproaches of cowardice with which the fanatic Syrian overwhelmed them, they manifested the utmost dejection; but the assassin, from the moment that all was discovered, never ceased to boast of his deed and to refer it to God.

“The three ulemas were sentenced to be beheaded. The court, in order to deter any other person from imitating the execrable zeal of Soleyman, decreed that he should first have his hand burnt off, and then be impaled; and that his body, left upon the instrument of execution, should be the food of the birds of prey. The infliction of this sentence was deferred till the day fixed for the funeral of his victim.

“From the moment that Kleber expired, a gun was fired every half hour. The funeral ceremony was announced on the morning of the 17th by salutes of artillery, the signal for which was given by the citadel, and which were repeated by all the forts. The troops of the province, the superior officers, military and civil, the authorities of the city, Christian and Mussulman, united by the same feeling of sorrow, came solemnly to the

head-quarters to receive the remains of Kleber. The coffin was placed on a funeral car, drawn by horses ; it was covered with a black pall, sprinkled with silver spots, and the paraphernalia of mourning formed a doleful contrast with the insignia of command. The funeral procession passed in religious order through the principal streets of Cairo, to the measured sound of cannon and musketry. It advanced slowly towards the entrenched camp, called Ibrahim Bey's. In the gorge of the bastion had been thrown up a hillock, the top of which was crowned with cypress ; all the emblems of grief there met the sorrowing eye.

“The staff alighted ; officers and soldiers came to throw crowns and flowers upon the body, and to drop a tear upon his grave.

“After the ceremony, the procession moved off, and directed its course to the esplanade of the Institute, where Soleyman and his accomplices were to suffer the punishment of their crime. They arrived—the ulemas dissolved in tears, and cursing the fate which had made them acquainted with the young Syrian ; the latter, walking with firm step and bold look, and reproaching his companions with a weakness unworthy of true believers. The courage of the fanatic was not shaken for a moment ; and if he did shed some tears, it was when in prison he was reminded of his family.

“The three ulemas were first beheaded. The horror which thrilled the immense concourse of spectators at the sight of this bloody execution reached not the heart of Soleyman : he looked on with disdainful indifference while the stake that was to serve for the instrument of

his death was sharpened. His hand was first held over a pan of burning coal. The fire consumed the flesh without extorting from him a groan. He endured, with the same firmness, the excruciating pangs of his second torture. His features were scarcely discomposed; and when the stake, fixed perpendicularly, had raised him into the air, he surveyed the multitude, and with sonorous voice repeated the profession of faith of the Mussulmans : — ‘ There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet.’

“ Soleyman remained alive upon the stake for four hours. He asked several times for drink : the executioners opposed its being given to him, as they said that it would instantly stop the pulsation of the heart; but, when they had retired, a French sentry, yielding to the impulse of pity, reached some water to the sufferer in a vessel placed at the end of his firelock. No sooner had Soleyman drunk it than he expired.”

Among the famous personages of Egypt, there is one whom I have omitted to mention, when treating of the family of Mehemet Ali : this is Ahmet Bey Defterdar, son-in-law of that prince. On my arrival here, I had a sort of desire to see him, but gave up the idea from an inexpressible feeling of horror. I really believe that a more bloodthirsty and ferocious being does not exist.

This man is at this time forty-five years old. He possesses some information, and is more particularly conversant in history and geography. He has made a very accurate map of the Cordofan, and the country of Senaar. He is master of immense wealth, and has magnificent palaces in Cairo, where he usually resides.

Brought up among the grandees of Constantinople, his manners are tinged by the education which he received, and by his long connexion with the most distinguished personages. He is remarkably polite; and it is under pleasing forms, under an attractive exterior, that he conceals a most atrocious spirit: he is generally dreaded in the country.

Sent to avenge the death of Ismael Pacha, the eldest son of his father-in-law,* and to insure the conquest of the Cordofan and Sennaar, he fulfilled this double mission with the utmost cruelty. He put to death more than thirty thousand persons, and the terror which he excited caused the emigration of one hundred thousand more. In the end, the country became so deserted, that a famine ensued, and gave the last blow to the population. He returned with a fortune of sixty millions, to which his title of Defterdar enables him to add two or three more every year.

A few facts will suffice to give you a frightful idea of this monster.

During his expedition in the Sennaar, a poor woman came to him to complain of a soldier who had refused to pay her for a glass of milk, which he had taken from

* Ismael Pacha, eldest son of Mehemet Ali, was detested in the Cordofan and the Sennaar, where he had committed a great number of atrocious actions. At Sennaar, he, one day, ordered one of the chiefs of the country to be bastinadoed. This man, enraged at such unworthy treatment, seized the first opportunity to revenge himself. Knowing that Ismael had gone to a village some leagues distant from his headquarters, with an escort of forty men only, he repaired thither at night with his followers, surprised him in his lodgings in the dark, despatched him and most of his guards, heaped dry branches of trees and other combustibles about the house, and set fire to it. The intelligence of this event reached Cairo on the 6th of December, 1821.

her and drunk. The value of the milk was five *parahe*, not quite five centimes, or about a halfpenny. Ahmet Bey asked her if she should know the man again. She pointed him out, on which he caused him to be seized by his guards, who, during that deplorable campaign, performed the office of executioners, and ordered his stomach to be ripped open, to see if the milk were there, forewarning the accuser that she should suffer the same fate if the charge proved false. It was true enough. He directed that she should be paid for her milk and dismissed.

Some time since, one of the men belonging to his stables slightly wounded a horse while shoeing him. Ahmet Bey summoned him into his presence, made him lie down upon his belly, and ordered a couple of red-hot horseshoes to be brought, and nailed one to each foot, while the persons in attendance durst not manifest the least sign of pity, much less oppose this act of barbarity. He, for his part, was quietly smoking his pipe, while feasting his eyes on this horrid sight.

The child of his gardener, only three years old, having taken a peach out of his garden and eaten it, he cleft him in two.

He was accustomed to have a snuff-box brought to him every half hour by one of his officers, and to take a pinch out of it ; having reason to believe that the officer helped himself out of the same box, he warmly charged him with it ; but the officer prostrated himself, and protested his innocence. One day, Ahmet Bey put a fly into the box, unknown to the man whom he suspected ; unfortunately the fly was gone the next time that the box was handed to him, and the officer lost his head.

Ahmet Bey had, for a long time, two lions, (whether he still has them I know not) which lived along with him in the Divan. These animals knew their master perfectly, but they knew nobody else. When he was in a good humour, he would call one of his servants, oblige him to play with the lions, and laugh most heartily at every wound which they gave him. He would not put an end to this cruel sport, till he was fairly tired of laughing, or till the poor wretch, covered with wounds and blood, dropped dead upon the floor.

Whenever Ahmet Bey is bled, he thrusts his hand in the blood, squeezes it between his fingers, eyes it with savage pleasure, and thinks it *softer than velvet* — that is his expression. This scene, which is of frequent occurrence, fills his attendants with dismay. They are alarmed lest he should take it into his head to make a fatal comparison.

I could mention many more traits of this kind, but my pen is weary of relating such horrors.

There is at Cairo another personage who has made a great noise, and whom I should still less have liked to see than Ahmet Bey, not that, like the latter, he is blood-thirsty and ferocious; but he is infamous. This is an apostate, who, for the sake of gold, has sold his conscience, exchanged the Gospel for the Koran, and renounced the name of his forefathers for that of Soliman Bey, a name of ignominy, by which he is now known throughout all Europe. After a brief interval of favour and transient good fortune, despised by those whose faith and country he has forsaken, still more despised by those whose absurd creed he has embraced, he drags on

a life of dishonour in shame and disgrace. Deserted even by those who flattered him most in the days of his elevation, he has most frequently no other companion than the remorse which clings to the soul of the renegade, and never tortures him so keenly as in solitude.

I was to have dined, one of these last days, with the minister at war, than whom there is not a man more necessary, or more devoted, to the cause of Mehemet Ali. His excellency had done me the honour to invite me to a splendid entertainment, which he intended to give in the part of his harem not inhabited by his women. The death of one of his nephews, which happened in the mean time, forbade him to indulge any other feelings than those of grief. This personage, who is reputed to be one of the most skilful of the Mahometans in the art of war, and in the science of administration, is distinguished by mild and polished manners. His wealth is immense: his palace is magnificent, and scarcely surpassed by that of Ibrahim, which is one of the finest in modern Egypt.

I shall say but a word concerning the menagerie which I have lately seen. It is less curious than most of those in Europe. The most remarkable of the animals of which it is composed are an elephant and two leopards.

In a preceding letter I have intimated that one of the principal duties of the Father warden of the Holy Sepulchre is to visit, at least once in the space of three years, the different monasteries scattered throughout Syria, Palestine, Cyprus, and Egypt. The present warden is now travelling in fulfilment of this duty. He arrived here last week, and landed at Boulak. He was at first

received in the house of a pious widow, where he waited till the moment when he could, according to custom, make his solemn entry into the city. On such occasions, unless circumstances imperatively forbid, it is seldom that the catholic population of the places where monastic establishments are situated fails to go forth to meet him, in order to do him honour, and to escort him to the convent, where he alights.

No sooner was it known at Cairo that his reverence was at Boulak, than the Coptic catholic bishop, the clergy, and a considerable concourse of catholics, prepared to go and meet him. Moved by a sentiment of religion, as much as by the recollection of the kindness which he had shown me during my residence at Jerusalem, I was anxious to join the persons who wished to give some *éclat* to the ceremony ; and, with this view, I requested the minister at war to have the goodness to lend me one of his horses. His excellency had the attention, not only to send me the animal which he kept for his own particular use, but also to place several of his *says* at my disposal.

The reverend Father made his entry amidst an immense concourse, collected by piety or curiosity along the road by which he was to pass. The Coptic bishop was on his right, and I on his left. The beauty of the horse which I rode, and the magnificence of his trappings, struck every eye ; and, as it was impossible not to perceive at a glance to whom he belonged, the catholics regarded this extreme complaisance of the minister for a poor monk of La Trappe, going to meet an humble Franciscan, as a mark of protection granted to our holy religion ; and the Mahometan crowd, save and except

a few murmurers, behaved so much the more respectfully.

On reaching the monastery, the reverend Father repaired immediately to the church; the train could scarcely follow him thither: the avenues were choked with the concourse of spectators. After the benediction, the clergy and the consuls were admitted to his reverence, and successively paid him their respects.

It was the second time that I had borne a part in this kind of ceremony, the more interesting for a Christian as it takes place in an infidel land. The reverend Father had visited Alexandria while I was in that city, and had been received there with great pomp. The merchant ships, Italian, Spanish, Austrian, and Sardinian, were decorated with flags, hoisted their respective colours, several of them fired their guns, and the consuls vied with each other in paying the venerable warden all possible honour and respect.

LETTER LI.

DEPARTURE FOR MOUNT SINAI — BEAUTIFUL DROMEDARY FROM THE STABLES OF THE VICEROY — GATE OF VICTORY — THE DESERT — PETRIFIED WOOD — SCRUPULOUS SHEIK — SUPPER — CAMELS — HOSPITABLE CUSTOM OF THE SHEIK — NIGHT-SCENE — SILENCE OF THE DESERT — CASTLE OF ASCHIROOD — ROUTE OF THE GREAT CARAVAN GOING TO MECCA — VIEW OF THE RED SEA AND SUEZ — ENVIRONS OF SUEZ — INTERIOR OF THE TOWN — UGLY CHILDREN — M. MANOLIA, AGENT OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY — VISIT TO THE GOVERNOR — BONAPARTE — GULF OF SUEZ — ARABIA PETREA — CHARCOAL-TRADE CARRIED ON BY THE ARABS — FOUNTAINS OF MOSES — PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA BY THE ISRAELITES — SHELLS OF THE RED SEA — ASH-WEDNESDAY — WATER — SMALL BIRD — ANTELOPE.

Cairo, March 18th, 1833.

Here I am, returned from Mount Sinai, my dear friend. After taking a few moments' rest, and arranging the

various notes hastily made during the journey, my first thought is to return to our correspondence, and to resume my narrative at the point where I broke off in my last letter.

On the day before my departure from Cairo, I was still undecided upon the choice of the animal that should carry me. "Take the horse of the desert," said some; "he will be easier and more convenient for you." — "Do not trust yourself to him," cried others; "he would not be able to bear the fatigue for any length of time. We advise you to choose the dromedary, the *ship of the desert*, as the Arabs call him." I followed the latter advice. Still there was left the difficulty of procuring a dromedary, and above all of finding a good one. The governor, being apprised of my embarrassment, sent to offer me one out of the viceroy's stables, which I eagerly accepted. He accordingly sent me a handsome white dromedary, richly caparisoned, covered with a magnificent laced housing of purple velvet, and marked, on the thigh, with the cipher of his Highness — a mark which, when seen at a distance by the Bedouins, would overawe them, and make them treat me with respect.

My caravan consisted of my janissary, a Bedouin sheik, and four Bedouins, who were to have under their charge the like number of camels, laden with a tent, a mattress, carpets, skins containing the quantity of water which we presumed we should need, other provisions, and beans for our cattle.

On the 14th of February, the caravan assembled at the Austrian consulate. The sheik went up to the consul, bowed before him, laid his hand successively on his

head, his beard, and his heart, and promised to take the greatest care of me, and to defend me at the peril of his own life. The other Bedouins made the like declaration. The consul, whose complaisance I cannot sufficiently praise, insisted on accompanying me till I was out of Cairo.

No sooner had I leaped upon my dromedary than I was quite astonished to find myself perched so high. I was warned to pay attention, in mounting or in alighting, to lean forward or backward, according to his motions, that I might not run the risk of falling. This animal was extremely spirited; but he had the fault of rising suddenly when one was about to mount him. To obviate this inconvenience, my Bedouins tied one of his legs, and forced him to bow his head to the ground till I was in the saddle.

I left Cairo by the gate of Victory, Bab el Nassr, over which is this inscription in the Cufic language: "There is no God but God; Mohamed is the apostle of God, and Ali the friend of God. May the divine favour be upon both!"

We had not proceeded more than a few hundred paces, when we perceived a great number of uninhabited houses, and at a little distance a mosque, and some handsome buildings of stone, surrounded with galleries. This place is called Quoubbeh. In the distance I perceived on the left the obelisk of Heliopolis: it reminded me of the venerated sycamore which stands near it, but which the neighbouring trees concealed from my view.

By degrees, all traces of habitations disappeared, and soon my eye, on whatever side, and to whatever distance

it was cast, could discover nothing but one vast, bare, barren plain—in short, the desert. One thing struck me, this was, to meet with petrified wood at every step. I felt the more surprise at this circumstance, as I am not aware that forests ever existed in this plain.

I had set out rather late from Cairo. After a ride of six hours, night obliged us to halt. Besides, I had need of rest. Though my habit of taking horse exercise rendered me less susceptible of fatigue from riding a dromedary, I was, nevertheless, tired. The camels were relieved from their loads, and I immediately had my tent set up. I was just entering it for the night, when my sheik came to me, and, pointing to the sky, asked me with supplicating look — what do you think?—I would lay any wager that you cannot guess. Gazing with all his eyes at the firmament, in which the stars were brightly glistening, he begged me to tell him if the sun had really set. I should have taken him for a maniac or a blind man, if my janissary had not reminded me that the Mussulmans, who observe the Ramadan, never eat till the sun is below the horizon; adding that my sheik, following the same practice out of devotion, durst not break his fast till he had assured himself by the testimony of another that his eyes did not deceive him. A word from me removed all his scruples.

Travellers contrive to encamp, if possible, on some spot of the desert where bushes are to be found, and speedily unload the camels, which are no sooner rid of their burden than they go in quest of a coarse and scanty meal. If they are obliged to stop on a place that is absolutely bare, as soon as the spot is fixed upon, a number of men

go in various directions to pick up what they can, and return, after a longer or shorter absence, with a quantity of dry plants, with which they make a large fire. The party seat themselves round it, and proceed to the preparation of their repast, consisting, in general, of unleavened cakes, made of flour mixed with water. These cakes, called in the country *rouga*, are extremely thin, and bake very soon under the ashes. Some eat rice, onions, and lentils. When they have done eating, they sometimes drink coffee, of which the Arab is fonder in the desert than any where else.

The camels possess a wonderful instinct for finding their master again, and the spot which they have quitted. At a certain hour, they return of themselves to the place where they were unloaded; nothing but a handful of beans is given to them; and there they wait quietly till it is time to resume their journey.

Before it was light, our Bedouins ate, according to their custom, what they had left the preceding day, loaded the camels, and the caravan started at day-break. During a ride of eleven hours, we met with nothing but sand, and here and there, at long intervals, a little dry grass.

In the evening, after encamping, we were preparing to sup, when I heard my sheik saying, in a loud voice, and in the Arabic language, some words which I took for a verse of the Koran. He repeated them three times. On the preceding evening he had commenced with the same ceremony, but I had not heard him. I asked Mahomet, my janissary, what it meant: "It is his custom," he replied, "before any meal to cry. 'Let

him who is hungry come and fill his belly.'” This practice originates in the hospitable disposition of the Arabs, to which I have had frequent occasion to advert.

At midnight I was suddenly awakened by an extraordinary noise and light. I stepped out of my tent, and saw, not far from me, my Bedouins at prayer, around a large fire of dry grass, the blaze from which shot up to a great height. Those sun-burnt faces, those black beards, those white turbans, behind which were grouped our camels, and those of some Arabs who had joined our caravan — all those countenances, whose character was rendered more expressive by the flame, which threw its light as far as my tent; that attitude of devotion; those words of religion breaking the silence of night; that desert; that serene sky; those sparkling stars with which it was studded; all concurred to make a deep and powerful impression upon me. Long did I contemplate this picture, worthy of the pencil of the most eminent of modern painters.

On the following day, sand, and nothing but sand: you see only that in the desert. No water, I need tell you: a ride of ten or eleven hours without stopping. As I could not read without difficulty on the dromedary, owing to the continual motion, I made a practice of getting a quarter of an hour ahead of the caravan, which went only at a foot-pace. When at that distance, I halted, recited the service, read, wrote, drew, and, as soon as my people overtook me, starting off again, I was gone like lightning, to do the same farther on. Sometimes I have pushed on to such a distance, that those whom I left behind me looked like specks. By this

mode of proceeding, I found myself less tired, and turned my time to account. The profound silence which reigned around had an inexpressible charm for me: it kept up a continual devotion in my soul, and incessantly brought back to it the thought of Him who is the sole consolation of the Christian.

We passed the night amidst sand-hills, on which there were a few bushes.

Two hours after sunset, my Bedouins, very noisy fellows when they are not asleep, had redoubled their clack. Their din prevented me from sleeping: I sent my janissary to inquire the cause of it. They replied that the place was unsafe, and that their noise was intended to warn robbers, if there were any about, that we were awake, and our party numerous. Owing to this precaution, I could not get a wink of sleep the whole night. Did they tell the truth? perhaps so. But the fact is that the Arab is never tired of talking: there is a shouting, a torrent of words, that never ceases, and that is poured forth with increased vehemence as soon as they encamp.

We set out at sunrise, proceeding between sand-hills, which bounded the view on either hand. When within two leagues of Suez, we perceived on the left the fortified castle of Aschiroud, to the south of which passes the great caravan on its way to Mecca. This castle stands in a sterile plain, which we crossed, overwhelmed by excessive heat. From this point we began to descry Suez and the Red Sea, which reminds one of the greatest wonders of the divine protection in favour of the people of Israel.

A league distant is a khan, the first that we have met with. Beside it is a well, at which our camels that had had no water for three days slaked their thirst.

The environs of Suez are melancholy beyond description. Not a blade of grass is to be seen for several leagues around: sand, dust, stones—nothing more. Let the eye turn which way it will, every thing in nature is of a grayish tint: light gray, dark gray, gray somewhat less dark, but still gray. It is the same aspect as that of the dreary borders of the Dead Sea. The rocks are bare, the air without inhabitants, every thing dismal, dull, and nought to temper the dismal effect, unless it be the view of the sea, whose waters are of an admirable azure.

The interior of the town corresponds with the exterior: ill-built houses, abject poverty, half-naked inhabitants, children entirely so, having, as throughout all Egypt, a cadaverous hue, and being extremely ugly. Childhood, so beautiful, so interesting, in almost all the countries of Europe, is absolutely hideous at Suez. Almost all the persons of that age have sore eyes, beset with flies, which they do not even take the trouble to drive away. Almost all of them are wry-necked, punch-bellied, or having other bodily defects still more repulsive. It is only among the old men that you perceive less disagreeable forms, and even some that are not destitute of dignity: nay, I have met with heads that were truly remarkable. It is a contrast to me the more striking and unaccountable, inasmuch as it appears to be diametrically opposite to the ordinary action of Nature.

Neither tree nor plant is to be seen at Suez, and it has

no water but what is brought thither. The inhabitant of that place dies without having ever smelt the fragrance of a flower; without having ever plucked a fruit of any kind; without having ever slaked his thirst at a limpid stream. What water they need, they have to fetch laboriously from a distance of two leagues; it is brackish, and scarcely drinkable. Boats go twice a day from Suez, to procure it on the east coast, which is about a mile off. It is then carried on the backs of camels to the shore.

Formerly a canal united the Nile with the Red Sea, and the waters of that bountiful river supplied the inhabitants of Suez as they passed. Of this important work nothing has long been left but ruins. It is reported as certain that the viceroy intends to reconstruct it.

The ebb-tide leaves to the south a great sand-bank, about two miles in length, to the east of which is a road which leads to the shipping.

No doubt is now entertained that Suez was the ancient town called, under the Ptolemies, Arsinoe, and subsequently Cleopatrie.

On entering, I proceeded to the house of M. Manoula, agent to the East-India Company, to whom I had letters of recommendation. He is a schismatic Greek, who, besides Arabic, which he speaks extremely well, knows something of English, so that I could converse with him without interpreter. He has under his care the supplies of coal destined for the steam-vessel which comes from time to time from Bombay to Suez.

I informed the governor of my arrival, and apprised him that, having to deliver to him a letter from the viceroy, I should have the honour of calling upon him in the

afternoon. M. Manoula accompanied me. His excellency received me with great ceremony. I handed to him the letter which I had brought: he took it, lifted it to his forehead, in token of respect, read it and said to me in the most gracious manner: "You are master of Suez." I was tempted to answer that, if I had a right to dispose of that town, as he seemed to intimate, I would gladly make him a present of it: however, I only replied by one of those civil expressions which on such occasions politeness never fails to suggest.

M. Manoula showed me the room which Bonaparte had occupied, the chair on which he sat, the table at which he wrote. I occupied that room, I lay on that divan, I sat on that chair, I wrote at that table. On opening my window, I saw the spot where that general, coming from the Springs of Moses, and wishing to save two leagues by avoiding the circuit of the point of the gulf, crossed the ford which is near Suez. It was the beginning of night; the tide flowed much more rapidly than had been expected; though attended by native guides, he narrowly escaped drowning. What blood and what tears would the wave that had carried him away have spared Europe! But he had a mission of chastisement to fulfil in regard to Europe, too long and too proudly guilty; like all other scourges, he was not destined to disappear till that mission should be accomplished.

Leaning on my window-sill, methought I beheld that extraordinary man amidst the waves. I saw his white-maned charger cleaving with broad chest the bitter billows, and making desperate efforts to reach the shore; while his imperturbable rider, relying upon his fortune,

was thinking of something totally different from the danger that threatened him.

What reflexions crowded upon me during the short moments that I passed in the apartment which that man had inhabited ! What recollections then succeeded in my soul !

“ I will send him against an hypocritical nation ; and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

“ It is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.

“ For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings ?

“ And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people ; and, as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth, and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.

“ And he saith, By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent : and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man.”

But oh ! the vanity of pride ! oh the nothingness of the greatness of him who is born to die !

“ Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith ? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it ? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

“ Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts send among his fat ones leanness, and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.” (Isaiah, x.)

Thus the words of Isaiah told me what I had seen, and explained to me the tragic end of the conqueror, who, after having been so long the glory of France, widowed of her kings, and the terror of the rest of the world, died proscribed, banished to a rock amidst the sea, two thousand leagues from those to whom he was a hero, two thousand from those to whom he was a scourge, and who has left nothing behind him but a coffin, on which the hand of God is heavily laid.

And, penetrated with religious fear, I sank on my knees and adored the awful decrees of that divine justice, which nothing can turn aside ; which, at its pleasure, breaks in pieces thrones and sceptres ; which forms and destroys nations ; and gives, when it will and how it will, empire or death, the diadem or fetters.

I set out at four in the afternoon, with the intention of sleeping at the Springs of Moses, and visiting the spot where, according to the tradition preserved from time immemorial in Arabia, and conformable to the opinions of the most eminent scholars, as Pococke, Shaw, Sicard, &c., the Israelites, pursued by Pharaoh, crossed the Red Sea. I had given orders to my janissary to go on before with the baggage, round the point of the gulf, to the place of rendezvous ; my sheik was to follow him, but only as far as the shore opposite to that of Suez, to take with him my dromedary, and to wait for me there. A few moments afterwards, accompanied by M. Manoula, I embarked in a large boat. The wind being favourable, we were soon across, and I found my sheik and my dromedary lying upon the sand.

I entered Arabia Petræa, through which the traveller

passes from Africa into Asia. This tract comprehends, as you doubtless know, that neck of land between the two gulfs of the Red Sea, which extends to the eastward of the Dead Sea and the Jordan: it derives its name from the quantity of rocks with which it is covered.

It was not long before I repented parting from my janissary. Night overtook us; I was without interpreter; the few Arabic words that I knew were not sufficient to render myself intelligible, and I very frequently needed some one to whom to communicate my thoughts. To me this was a kind of torment, which, till then, I had never suspected. We followed the coast of the Red Sea: my sheik walked in silence by my side. Presently, we were overtaken by some Bedouins, who joined us. A conversation ensued between them and my companion, who drew closer to me; it became extremely noisy, and might have alarmed me, had I not known that this is a constant habit among these people, let them be talking about what they will. It was impossible for me to catch a single word. I imagined, however, that I could perceive, from their gestures and their looks, that my dress was the subject of their talk and their exclamations. For the rest, I had no apprehensions: I knew that when the arm of the sea is once passed, the traveller is safe. Strange Arabs never come to the peninsula of Sinai, because they would run the risk of being seized by the Bedouins of those parts.

At length, after a march of five hours, over rough and stony ground, we discerned some palm-trees, which apprized us that we were not far from the Springs of Moses. Just as we reached the trees, we met a caravan of Be-

douins going with charcoal to Cairo. I was instantly surrounded, but merely as an object of curiosity ; their respect, their homage, were reserved for my dromedary : he belonged to the viceroy's establishment ; and to him, of course, all such demonstrations were due.

Charcoal is one of the principal resources of a great part of the Arabs of the peninsula of Sinai. They make it from the wood of the small trees which they find upon their mountains, and carry it in considerable quantity for sale to Cairo. With the produce they purchase flour, beans, tobacco, coffee, and other necessaries. Their profits are very scanty : a camel-load sells for twenty-five or thirty francs, at most ; and the journey, including the stay there, takes about six weeks. Some gain a living by transporting into Egypt the goods that arrive by the Red Sea at Suez ; others, by supplying the caravans with camels.

My people were not to be seen, and I began to be rather uneasy ; but, fixing my eyes on the point from which they ought to come, in about a quarter of an hour, I at length discovered Mahomet, my janissary, by his white turban and his red dress : he was at the head of my caravan, near a palm-tree. Unluckily, my tent was pitched near the Arabs ; their clack during the night was worse than ever : notwithstanding my fatigue, it was impossible for me to sleep.

At daybreak, I went to the Springs of Moses, which were but a few paces from us ; they are on the east shore of the gulf, opposite to the valley called the Valley of Wandering, four leagues to the south of Suez. There are eight of them, surrounded by about thirty clamps of

palm-trees. Their water is sulphureous, impregnated with gypsum, and disagreeable to the palate, but wholesome for animals; our camels were impatient to quench their thirst with it. To the caravans, which in all ages have made these springs a halting-place, their utility is inestimable. They owe their name indisputably to the great legislator of the Hebrews, who crossed the Red Sea opposite to them.

After visiting the springs, I proceeded towards that sea on which the sun began to fling his first rays. I was opposite to the place where "Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." (Exod. xiv. 21, 22.)

I was on the very spot where "the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh, that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them." (Exod. xiv. 26, 27, 28.)

How shall I tell you, my dear friend, what passed in my soul, when reading the holy Scriptures in sight of that ever-memorable theatre of the infinite bounty of God towards Israel, and of his terrible justice against its enemies! It seemed as though I beheld the two-fold

spectacle of the great deliverance of a whole persecuted people, departing from Egypt, and crossing the sea dry-shod, under the protection of a high and mighty arm, and of the awful punishment of a whole persecuting people, hardening itself more and more under the strokes of the divine vengeance, and blindly plunging into the waves. I heard this cry of despair burst from Pharaoh and his army :—" Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians !" and those words of God to Moses :—" And they (the Egyptians) shall know that I am the Lord." (Exod. xiv. 25, 18.)

I beheld that sea and that shore covered with wrecks and corpses, and, before those corpses and those wrecks, relatives, wives, children, looking aghast at their dead Egyptians, and acknowledging the might of His arm whose name is the Omnipotent.

And, like Israel, I was seized with fear, and I "believed the Lord and his servant Moses." And, feelings of the deepest admiration and love mingling with that fear, I resolved that the shore which three thousand years ago rang with the song of thanksgiving sung by Moses and the children of Israel, should hear my voice repeat the same song :—" I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously : the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." (Exod. xv.)

O my friend, how the soul expands, how it is lifted above the vain thoughts and the paltry objections of philosophers, in this land of miracles, where, even among an infidel nation, are still preserved traditions of the awful vengeance of the Lord ! This is not the place to

descant on all that incredulity has striven to oppose to the sacred Scriptures, in order to throw some doubt at least on the nature of a prodigy which was witnessed by millions, of a prodigy attested by numerous monuments, by the religious and yearly recurring ceremonies of a whole people whose descendants still live, recorded, celebrated from age to age by writers, by prophets, by kings, by contemporary generations, and without which the history of the Hebrews, their departure from Egypt, and their entire deliverance, would be utterly inexplicable. The dishonesty of most of the enemies of religion has not been able to cope with the overwhelming mass of facts which are connected with this event, and serve for evidences of its truth, and, in its impotence, it has found itself obliged to seek an explanation of it in purely natural causes. It tells us that it was the ebb-tide which saved the one, the flood which engulfed the others ; as if the ebb and flood would obey a hand outstretched over the waters, as if they piled up those waters on both sides, prevented them from running off, and made "the floods" stand "upright as an heap !" as if it were possible to suppose that Israel knew, and that Pharaoh, his generals, his officers, his priests, his magicians, all stupidly silly, knew not, what is known by the most ignorant persons, nay, by the very children dwelling on the sea-coasts ; as if the gradual movement of the waters during the ebb and flood must not have given, at least to the greater part of those who had the temerity to venture into their bed, time to retire and to escape their pursuit. This I know from experience. While at Suez, I went with M. Manoula, during the ebb-tide, to

the distance of at least five hundred paces on the beach, in search of shells, and we convinced ourselves that, however speedily the tide may rise, persons, even on foot, have time to reach the shore, though they may be still further from it than we were.

On returning to my people, I called them together and told them that I had come to the desert to think of God, who shows himself more propitious to the prayers of the soul which in solitude humbly implores his mercy : I enjoined them, when they had any thing to say to each other, to speak in a low tone, and, when once encamped, to keep profound silence. On these conditions I promised that they should be supplied every night with bread, coffee, and tobacco. They repeated what they had already told me, that, if they talked at night, it was to intimidate robbers. I replied that my janissary and I would attend to that point. They bowed, and, in token of their disposition to obey me, they laid their hands upon their hearts.

I was in the same desert through which all Israel had passed ; I was pursuing, as it were, the same track. On this and the following days, most frequently with the Bible in my hand, I went through, one by one, the various prodigies by which the Lord had guided, fed, clothed, preserved, the immense multitude led by his servant ; that pillar of cloud, luminous at night, dark in the day-time, screening a whole people from the heat of a scorching sun, and marking at dusk the hour and the place for encamping ; that manna, falling from heaven every morning excepting that of the sabbath-day, to afford nourishment to all ; those garments, uninjured by time

or wear ; those waters, which at the prayer of Moses lost their bitterness, and became fit to drink. This long series of miracles were the habitual subjects of my thoughts during the journey to Sinai.

We travelled nine hours without discerning the least vegetation. To the east, we had bare mountains ; to the west, the Red Sea. In the course of the day, we found talc in great quantity on our road ; it looked as if strewed with diamonds and fragments of mirrors. So intensely bright were the solar rays reflected from them, that I was frequently obliged to shut my eyes, to such a degree were they dazzled. I picked up a few very fine specimens.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, I took with me an Arab, and, while my caravan continued slowly moving on, I struck off to the Red Sea, from which we were not far distant, to seek on the beach some of the fine shells with which it abounds. I found some splendid specimens, and one that was particularly remarkable ; this I specially recommended to the care of my Arab, at the same time directing him to carry the basket in which I had put them all. He said that he perfectly understood me, and his cheerful look seemed to assure me that I might rely upon his attention. But scarcely had I proceeded a few steps, after remounting my dromedary, when he came running to me with joyful look, holding towards me my beautiful shell, the numerous spikes of which he had broken off. A burst of vexation escaped me : till we rejoined our caravan, he took it for an exclamation of satisfaction. Nor was it till then that I learned from my janissary that neither of us had comprehended

the other : he imagined that I had ordered him to break off one by one the points of my shell, lest they should hurt me, and had lost no time to obey.

On the 20th, I was awake long before dawn. I went out of my tent, and seated myself at the entrance. My Bedouins, at a little distance, were sleeping around some half-extinct embers. At the slight noise which I made their camels raised their heads, but laid them down again immediately on the sand. Silence reigned around me. It was Ash-Wednesday, a day specially set apart by the Church, to remind its members of the curse pronounced against the first man after his fall, and in which his whole posterity is involved. I picked up a handful of the dust of the desert, marked my brow with it, and, giving myself the salutary warning which it was not possible for me to receive at the foot of the altars of Christ, from the lips of one of his ministers, I pronounced these words : — “Recollect, O man, that dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Then, joining in spirit and in heart the Christian people, who, on this day more especially, beseech the Lord “to have pity upon them according to his great mercy,” I waited for sunrise, meditating upon that awful sentence of death pronounced upon the human race, the execution of which none can escape, and which it will by and by be my turn to undergo. It has often been the case, my dear Charles, that I have felt deeply moved and violently torn from the things of this world, while listening to the powerful words demonstrating their nothingness, issuing from the pulpit amidst the doleful solemnities with which the holy season of penance

commences ; but I declare to you that this desert, where the plant itself cannot live ; this soil, which is but dust, and from which the blast sweeps away in the twinkling of an eye all traces of the footsteps of man, telling him that thus shall he be swept away by the blast of death ; this universal silence, not even interrupted like that of the grave by the voice of grief or the song of mourning ; those ruins, and those empty sepulchres ; those carcases of kingdoms and of cities, which had just passed before my eyes ; and that holy Bible, which related to me the crimes of generations upon the spot where they were committed, explained to me the transitory nature, the paltriness, and the term of human life, and showed to me, as still dwelling in the heavens, Him who will have man know that he is the Lord, and that He infallibly overtakes by his justice the presumptuous mortal who disdains his mercy — all this spake to my soul in much stronger language, in a language the energy of which no words can express.

We had a long day's journey before us : the camels were loaded early, and we set out. Nothing was to be seen but the same desert ; not the least vestige indicated that any traveller had ever passed that way : only, for the first time since we left the Springs, I saw birds in the distance sailing in the air. Some ravens, perched on the pinnacles of the neighbouring rocks, flew away, scared at our approach. The heat was suffocating, the ground scorching. I was thirteen hours on horseback without alighting. Overcome with fatigue and thirst, I asked for water. At the first gulp, I perceived that it was beginning to become putrid. I had been silly

enough to buy new water-skins at Cairo, and to this cause its bad taste was to be attributed. The Bedouins offered me some which they had brought from Suez, but to me it was still more disagreeable than my Nile water.

In the evening we encamped close to an enormous rock of foliated granite, near which were some brush-wood and tamarisks. Having taken some refreshment and given a few beans to my dromedary, which I chose to attend to myself, I left my people and went to a hill at a little distance, to enjoy for a few moments the cool of the evening. The rays of the setting sun, intercepted here and there by the mountains, threw but a faint and shifting light between the chasms of the rocks. Adhering to their promise, my Bedouins were silent, and took their supper quietly around the fire which they had kindled. I availed myself of this profound tranquillity to revert to the important thoughts which had engaged my mind in the morning, and prepared myself for sleep by new meditations on death and the awful eternity that succeeds it. I returned late to my tent.

Next day, from morning till evening, we travelled between calcareous mountains and hills of unequal height, forming beside and before us an immense amphitheatre. In the distance, other mountains, whose much loftier summits were lost in the clouds, bounded our horizon. Most of them were of odd, strange forms. Some seemed to be cloven, others broken in two, and others turned topsy-turvy, as if by an earthquake; in short, it looked to me like a real chaos of mountains, hills, rocks, stones, rolled one upon another, and nowhere a blade of grass, nowhere the least sign of vegetation.

Nevertheless, about four o'clock we saw a small bird fly past us. The sight of a little bird any where else is thought nothing of, if, indeed, it is noticed at all ; but in the desert, and especially in a desert that is absolutely bare, dry, sterile, where there is no indication of life, you must have felt the peculiar gratification afforded by such a sight, in order to form any idea of it. A little further my people discovered what they took to be the track of a gazelle. We conjectured that there might be a spring in the vicinity, and we were not mistaken. We discovered a few slender rills of a bitter, brackish water, fit at most for cattle : our camels quenched their thirst with it. I could not drink it, though suffering severely from long thirst.

I was more fortunate on the following day. After a toilsome ride of nine hours, which the extreme heat rendered still more fatiguing, we halted in the bottom of a narrow valley, bordered by masses of peaked rocks, in the clefts of which my Bedouins found water : they immediately brought me some, and, though it was very turbid, I thought it delicious in comparison with that in my skins.



LETTER LII.

TRIBE OF BEDOUINS—BEDOUINS OF THE PENINSULA OF SINAI—VIEW OF MOUNT SINAI—DANGEROUS ROAD—MONASTERY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION—SINGULAR WAY OF ENTERING—SUPERIOR AND COMMUNITY—SUPPER IN THE REPECTORY—EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR OF THE MONASTERY—MOSQUE—CHAPEL OF THE BURNING BUSH—RELICS OF ST. CATHERINE—THE EMPRESS CATHERINE—GARDEN—DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD TO THE ARABS—LIBRARY—EDICT ISSUED BY MAHOMET CONCERNING THE CHRISTIANS—TRAVELLERS' REGISTER.

Cairo, March 24, 1833.

On the 23d of February, by daybreak, we had resumed our journey. Three leagues from the valley where we

had passed the night, we met a whole tribe of Bedouins, descending from the mountain, with their camels, their asses, and their sheep. As the least sterile part of the desert affords those animals but a very scanty supply of food, the places where they stop are soon exhausted, and their owners are, consequently, obliged to strike their tents, and to remove and pitch them elsewhere.

The sight of this tribe reminded me of the patriarchs, and some of those scenes of which the books of the Old Testament hand down to us such natural and touching delineations. Methought I beheld Lot retiring with his family, and taking his cattle along with him, because the same tract could not support them as well as those of his uncle Abraham. With the assistance of my janissary, I liked, as we rode on, to enter into conversation with the Bedouins of my retinue about the manners and customs of such of their people as dwell in the peninsula of Mount Sinai; and I derived no slight gratification from hearing them relate things, which, in more than one respect, correspond with the habits and simplicity of life of the men of the first ages, "laborious, always abroad in the daytime, lodging in tents at night, changing their abode according to the convenience of pasturage, consequently, often employed in encamping and decamping, because they could make but short journeys with so large a train."*

The Bedouins of the peninsula of Sinai are brown, or rather almost black. They are spare, but well made, and in general above the middling height. Their clothing con-

* *Mœurs des Israélites*, p. 12.

sists of a white woollen shirt with short sleeves, and linen drawers. The shirt reaches nearly half-way down the leg; over it they wear a sort of tunic, likewise of wool, with white and brown stripes, without sleeves, open before, and having slits on the sides to put the arms through. In summer they retain the shirt only, compressing it round the waist with a leathern belt. The head they cover with a white or red turban. Children go bare-headed. The feet are shod with a sandal, fastened by means of a leathern thong or a worsted cord: all of them are bare-legged.

The garments of the women are, like those of the Egyptian females, very long linen drawers, and a blue cloth gown, open at the bosom, with wide sleeves, slit up for half their length. A band of black stuff, eight or nine inches broad, and twenty long, covers the whole face, excepting the eyes. Over that they throw a white veil. They wear necklaces of glass beads, and many of them adorn the instep with clumsy silver rings.

The moveables of these tribes are as simple as their garments. They consist of a tent of brown woollen stuff, which the Bedouins make themselves, a few stones for grinding corn, coffee-pots, an instrument for roasting coffee, an earthenware mortar to pound it in, and a cauldron. To these articles, to which ordinary establishments are limited, must be added for persons in better circumstances a certain number of woollen sacks to hold the charcoal in which they deal.

With the exception of very small and very rare pieces of ground, encompassed with wretched fences, you distinguish no separate properties in the peninsula of Sinai.

One or more camels, a few goats and sheep, constitute the whole wealth of an Arab family. Each tribe settles upon a tract of land not occupied by any other ; there it lives, pasturing its cattle, making charcoal, and staying so long as the spot which it has chosen is capable of supplying its wants. Opulence is expressed by the number of camels : he who has none is poor. It is proverbially said of such a one :—" He is poor ; he has no camels ;" and they add :—" God provides for him ; he who has gives to him who has not."

As the cattle are frequently intermixed, and the tents stand open, it is of the utmost importance for the Arabs to instil early into their children a great horror of theft, and to punish that crime with extreme severity. They mention with praise the justice of a father, from whom a goat was stolen by his own daughter. He pursued the culprit into the mountains, and, having found her engaged in cooking the stolen goat, he bound her hand and foot, and threw her into the fire. An unfaithful wife, an unmarried female who has lost her honour, are punished with the same rigour. The execution is not public : the husband or father takes the culprit aside upon the mountain, where the cruel punishment is inflicted.

The general character of these tribes is a passionate love of independence : so far from envying the condition of the inhabitants of towns, they only feel contempt for them. Their minds are imbued with a certain pride, and with some lofty sentiments. Hospitality is so dear to them, that they exercise it even towards their enemies. The Bedouin despises the titles invented by human vanity ; that to which he attaches most value is

the title of father : as soon as he has a son, he adds the name of the child to his own.

If, on the one hand, the father is extremely fond of his children, on the other, nothing can equal the respect paid by children to the author of their being. Among the Bedouins of my retinue, two are married, and fathers of families. They are excellent fellows, whose services I have taken pleasure in rewarding from time to time by little presents ; and never did either of them receive the slightest gift without raising his eyes to heaven and saying : — “ That shall be for my dear mother ! ” his first thought being of her to whom he owed his existence.

The weapon of the Bedouins is a matchlock ; were you to give them the finest European guns, they would not use them. If you explain to them the advantages of the latter, they listen to you with a smile of incredulity and pity. They likewise carry, stuck in their belt, a curved dagger, usually silver-hilted, about two feet long, and double-edged.

While looking at the tribe mentioned in the beginning of this letter passing before me, I could not help remarking, with a feeling of compassion for these poor people, the singular kind of asses which formed part of their train. These animals have an extremely small body and a prodigious head. I cannot give you any better idea of them than by telling you that they are not unlike those little asses grotesquely carved in wood which you meet with at village fairs. What a difference between their form and that of the elegant Egyptian asses ! Accustomed to the latter, the hideous appearance of these forced me to turn away my eyes. And yet, how unjust

I was ! this race is a treasure to the Bedouin of Arabia. It climbs with astonishing facility up the rocks in quest of water ; it possesses extraordinary strength, and never tires. The Bedouins assured me that the finest ass of Cairo would be of no use to them for the species of labour in which they employ their's. I have, in fact, seen some of them laden with two large skins full of water, and have been astounded at the agility with which they carried them on the most difficult roads.

We had a long day's journey to go on the 24th, and set out very early. The farther we proceeded, the more numerous were the rocks and stones that we encountered, so that they fully justified the name of Petræa, given to the part of Arabia through which we were travelling.

It was ten days since we left Cairo. Arriving, about half-past one, on the plateau of a hill, I perceived at last the majestic summit of Mount Sinai, the term of my pilgrimage. I immediately alighted, and, kneeling devoutly, adored, with all the powers of my soul, Him who "descended upon it in fire," to speak to the house of Jacob, to proclaim his law to the children of Israel.

I have frequently had occasion to remark to you that, in certain circumstances of life, in certain situations, the sensations become so keen, and the impressions which they produce are so profound, that human language is incapable of describing them. This I had experienced at the sight of Jerusalem, when ascending Calvary, on entering the tomb of our Saviour, in the grotto of Bethlehem : and again I experienced it in the presence of that sacred mountain.

We were still six leagues from it. As it was impos-

sible to reach it the same day, I ordered a halt at an earlier hour than usual. But, engrossed by the recollection of the events connected with Sinai, instead of going into my tent to rest myself, I passed a considerable time in contemplating it, till I should be able to bow down my face to the dust of its rock.

I spent part of the night in reading Exodus. I have always admired the narratives of Moses: I have read them a hundred times, and always with new delight, with a desire to read them again; and yet I should never have suspected that they could prove to me a source of such exquisite pleasure as they imparted during that happy night.

By daybreak, on the 25th, we were on our way. After a ride of an hour and a half, we lost sight of Sinai, and it was only at long intervals that we again perceived it. It is surrounded by mountains of the most extraordinary aspect: I cannot compare their appearance, from the distance at which we were, to any thing but to the waves of the sea, raised to a prodigious height by a tremendous storm, and suddenly petrified. This image, singular as it may seem to you, is the best that I can find to convey a correct idea of the scene before me.

To shorten the route, my Bedouins made me take a road but little frequented, and one of the worst that we had yet met with. It leads to a defile so steep, that I should not have thought of climbing it, had I not relied upon the excellence of my dromedary. I was surrounded by immense rocks, rising almost perpendicularly, sometimes overhanging, and as alarming for their height as for their bulk. From these masses are not unfrequently

detached enormous fragments; some of which, stopped in their fall, remain suspended, as it were, over the head of the traveller: you expect, at the moment when you are passing, that they will drop, and carry you along with them. Several are not less than fifty or sixty feet thick. This country appears to have sustained, some time or other, the prolonged shock of a violent earthquake.

After a rough and very fatiguing ride of two hours, I found myself in a spacious plain, which terminates in a gentle slope to a stony and narrow valley, amidst which is the famous monastery of the Transfiguration, erroneously called St. Catherine's by many travellers. At a distance, it looked to us like a little fortress. Its site is 5420 feet above the level of the Red Sea.*

On reaching the convent, I saw, at a small aperture, some of the monks, who, by means of a pulley, let down a long rope, forming at the extremity a large ring. In this ring I placed myself, and was immediately hoisted up to the height of at least forty feet, and introduced to the community. I might have entered by a door; for, notwithstanding what has been said, there is one, but it is walled up, and opened only to admit the patriarch, who resides at Constantinople, and whose visits are very rare. The superior of Mount Sinai had apprized me at Cairo of this little aerial trip, and, to spare me the trouble of the ascent, he had had the extreme kindness to offer to give orders that I should be admitted at the door: but I had thought it right to decline such an

* The height of Sinai exceeds that of the convent by 2,020 feet, consequently it is 7,440 feet above the Red Sea.

extraordinary favour. It was not agreeable to my feelings that the monks should take me for a great personage, disguised in the garb of a Trappist: and, on the other hand, the Arabs, whom there is good reason to distrust, and against whom are directed the measures of precaution relative to the introduction of strangers, might have conceived the same idea, and committed some excesses.

The community had been forewarned, six weeks before, of my speedy coming. I was cordially received. I immediately delivered my letters of recommendation to the superior, who loaded me with attentions, and allotted to me a very neat chamber, where, as at St. Saba, there was a picture of the Virgin, before which a lamp was kept burning. To this civility he added that of placing at my disposal Father John of Cephalonia, the only one who spoke Italian, and to desire him to accompany me wherever I went.

When the supper bell rang, I asked permission to join the community; it was granted in the most gracious manner, and I was told that it would, nevertheless, be for the first and the last time. Lent began, according to the Greek calendar, on the following day, and for the first three days the monks were to fast on bread and water. I expressed my intention of joining them in this penance, but I was not allowed; and to my shame I confess that I was not sorry for it. To pass a fortnight in the desert, to drink bad water, to be exposed to excessive heat, to be perched the whole day on a dromedary, to lie hard at night, to sleep little — all this would have fatigued a younger and more robust body than mine, and I had my hands and face roasted by the sun into the bargain.

The monastery of the Transfiguration is a sort of little village, enclosed by high walls, the stones of which are enormous blocks of granite. The area is a quadrangle some eighty paces every way; and the interior is a mass of irregular buildings, erected after a variety of plans, on very unequal ground. The whole is mean excepting the church, but the utmost cleanliness prevails throughout. One of the things which the traveller, coming from the desert remarks soonest and with most pleasure, is the abundance of water: that never fails. Besides the springs, which are sufficient for the ordinary supply, there is a well, which dates, it is said, from the time of the patriarchs. It is asserted, that close to this well the deliverer of the Hebrews met the daughter of Jethro.

The convent, properly so called, was built in the year 527, by the emperor Justinian. There is still to be seen the edifice which served as a church for the catholics, and which was wrested from them one hundred and forty years ago by the schismatic Greeks, to whom it now belongs. I could not survey this structure without a feeling of acute pain. Alas! unless Heaven comes to the aid of the catholics, the gold and the intrigues of the Greeks will gradually deprive them of all their sanctuaries, and leave them in possession of not one of the establishments which they have in the East.

In conducting me to the church, the friar pointed out to me a mosque, which, he told me, had been erected for the Arabs formerly employed in the interior service of the house.

The beauty of the church surprised me. It is divided

into three naves by two rows of columns of granite, which support a roof, painted blue and sprinkled with stars of gold. These columns, which have been stupidly covered with plaster, belong to various orders of architecture ; most of them are of the Corinthian : they date from the commencement of the sixth century.

The whole of the pavement, as well as the walls of the sanctuary, is of white and black marble, brought from Italy, and of good workmanship. The church is lighted by a great number of lamps of silver and silver gilt — presents made by the Russians, because the body of St. Catherine, for whom they have a great veneration, is deposited there. The walls are adorned with numerous pictures, in rich frames ; but there is not one, the execution of which possesses any merit.

I was next taken to what is called the chapel of the Burning Bush.

“ Now Moses,” we are told in Exodus, “ kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian : and he led the flock to the back-side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

“ And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush ; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

“ And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

“ And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

“ And he said, Draw not nigh hither : put off thy

shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

“Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

“And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-master

“Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” (Exod. iii. 1—10.)

It is on the very spot where God manifested his presence by such a miracle that, according to tradition, the chapel destined to perpetuate the memory of it is built. None is allowed to enter it unless barefoot. The sanctuary is in every respect like those of Palestine: a raised altar, supported by pillars, and under the altar the revered spot.

Pococke asserts that the monks have planted in their garden a bush similar to those which grow in Europe, and that, by the most ridiculous imposture, they hesitate not to affirm that it is the same which Moses saw — the miraculous bush. The assertion is false, and the alleged fact a mere invention.

My visit to the chapel, in which are preserved the remains of St. Catherine, was deferred till the following day. The body of that saint, I was told, was quite entire sixty years ago. Since then, it has been so often removed in order to save it from the depredations of the Arabs, and it has suffered so much from damp, that the

principal parts only are now left. Those which are shown are the head and a hand, in very good preservation.

At ten in the morning, I was conducted with great ceremony to the shrine, which was about to be opened. The superior and the community were at the church : all the lamps were lighted. I had been told that the relics of the saint possess the wonderful property of diffusing around them a fragrant perfume. No sooner, in fact, was the shrine opened than a most agreeable smell proceeded from it. The superior then most respectfully lifted up the head, which was wrapped in cloth of gold, surmounted by a crown, also of gold, attached with great art. The head was quite black. The hand was then drawn forth. It is extremely white. I remarked on the fingers, which still retain the nails, several valuable rings, and among them one of diamonds of great beauty. I was told of a ring of still greater value, and assured that the saint had received it from our Lord himself, and that she had it on her finger when she was discovered on the mountain that bears her name ; but it was not shown to me : it is most religiously preserved, and may be touched only by the patriarch. On this subject, the following story was related to me : I repeat it, without giving it to you as an article of faith.

The Empress Catherine had long been desirous to possess this miraculous ring. Such importance did she attach to it, that at length she determined to send an archimandrite with presents to apply for it in her name. Great was the consternation of the Fathers ; but, as they durst not refuse any thing to so mighty a sovereign,

the zealous protectress of the monastery, after much hesitation, it was determined that the envoy should be authorized to take the ring. The shrine was opened with the utmost solemnity. The archimandrite, in magnificent pontifical attire, and arrayed in all the attributes of his dignity, approached to fulfil his mission ; but at that moment flames burst from the interior, burned the clerical garments to ashes, and pursued the rash envoy, who saved himself only by a precipitate flight from their terrible vengeance.

On leaving the chapel, the superior had the generosity to present me with two rings, which had touched the hand of the saint.

I then proceeded by an underground way to the garden of the good Fathers. This garden is scarcely any thing but sand, and has but a very small quantity of vegetable mould : a streamlet luckily runs through it, and contributes to render it extremely fertile. Its cultivation is consigned to Arabs, who work under the superintendence of a monk. They raise abundance of culinary vegetables, citrons, oranges, which look well, but are ill-tasted, apricots, apples, pears, and other fruits, of inferior quality, yet in high request at Cairo, where they are sold, and procure some resources for the community. The grapes are better, and yield a tolerably good wine, but in very small quantity.

The monks of the Transfiguration, like those of St. Saba, refuse bread to none : to the women and children are given two small loaves, to the men four, and frequently six. Formerly, the community was obliged to add oil and even money to this distribution ; but, the

Bedouins having stopped and plundered a caravan of the viceroy's, travelling from Tor to Cairo, Mehemet has relieved the poor Fathers from this burdensome tribute.

In the environs of the monastery, fifty Arab families, belonging to it in some measure, are encamped under tents. They have cattle and camels; for a stipulated price they undertake the carrying of every kind that is to be done for the community; and they also furnish travellers with beasts for riding.

The next day I visited the library. It is still considerable, though it has been robbed at different periods; but the most curious works are gone: very few of the manuscripts, I am assured, are left, and these not of ancient date. Among those to which the Fathers attach high importance is a copy of an edict of the Prophet, addressed to all Christians. The original of this edict, written in Cufic characters on antelope's skin, and signed with the Prophet's own hand, is now in the Grand Signor's treasury. It was originally deposited in the convent of the Transfiguration. In 1517, after the conquest of Egypt, Selim I. demanded it, and left in its stead a copy written on parchment and certified by himself. Here follows a translation of it, given by M. Mauchin in his work on Egypt.

“ In the name of God, clement and merciful,

“ Mohamed ebn Abdallah has issued this edict for the whole world in general. He proclaims that he is the friend of God, and that he is charged with the care of all his creatures. In order that none may plead ignorance, I have written this despatch in the form of an ordinance, for my nation and for all those who are in Christendom,

in the East, or in the West, near and afar off, for all who are eloquent and not eloquent, known and unknown. He who shall not follow what it contains, and will not do what I enjoin, will act contrary to the will of God, and will deserve to be cursed, be he who he may, sultan or any other Mussulman.

“If a priest or a hermit retires to a mountain, cavern, plain, desert, town, village, or church, I shall be behind him as his protector from all enemies, I myself in person, my forces, and my subjects; as those priests are my rayas, I shall avoid doing them any injury. Voluntary contributions only shall be taken from them, and they shall not be constrained to pay any. It is not lawful to drive a bishop from his bishopric, nor a priest from his religion, nor a hermit from his hermitage: nothing belonging to their churches shall be used in the building of mosques, or even in the building of the dwellings of Mussulmans. He who shall not conform to this will violate the law of God and that of his Prophet.

“It is forbidden to impose contributions upon priests, bishops, and religious men. I will maintain their privileges, wherever they may be, on land or on sea, in the east or in the west, in the south or in the north: they shall enjoy my privileges and my safeguard against all disagreeable things. Those who shall sow and plant in the mountains and in the sequestered places, shall pay neither tithes nor contributions, not even voluntarily, when the produce is destined for their own subsistence. If they are in want of corn, they shall be assisted with one measure for each house, and they shall not be obliged to go forth to war, or to pay any taxes.

“ Those who possess immoveable property or merchandise, shall not give more than twelve silver drachmas per year. None shall be molested; neither shall any enter into strife with those who follow the precepts of the Gospel, but behave mildly towards them, avoiding all disagreeable things.

“ When a Christian woman shall join the Mussulmans, they shall treat her well, and permit her to go and pray in a church, without placing any obstacle between her and her religion. He who does the contrary shall be regarded as a rebel against God and his Prophet.

“ The Christians shall be assisted to preserve their churches and their houses, which will assist them to preserve their religion; they shall not be obliged to bear arms, but the Mussulmans shall bear arms for them, and they shall not disobey this ordinance until the end of the world.

“ The witnesses who attest the truth of this edict, which has been issued by Mohammed ebn Abdallah, the envoy of God, for all the Christians, and which is the complement of what has been granted to them, are :

“ Aly ebn Taleb, Aboubekr Aly Kohafey, Omar ebn el Khattâb, Otman ebn Hassan, Abou el Darda, Abou Horeyrah, Abdallah Abou Massaoud, Abbas ebn Abdel Motteb, Fodeyl ebn Abbas, Zobeir ebn Aouân, Talhat ebn Obeydallah, Saad ebn Maôz, Saad ebn Obadey, Thabet ebn Kays Mou Khayetmeth, Hachem ebn Ommeyeh, Hâreth ebn Thabet, Abdallah ebn Amrou, Ebn el Ass, Amer ebn Yassin, Meazzam ebn Kerachy, Adel Azim ebn Hassan.

“ This edict was written by the hand of Aly ebn Taleb,

the 3d of Mohanam, in the second year of the Hegira, and of Jesus Christ, the 1st of August, 622 : it is signed by the Prophet himself. Happy he who shall do, and woe to him who shall not do according to its contents."

I turned over with curious eye the book, or kind of register, in which the strangers who visit the monastery write their names. For a long time past travellers have not been numerous. Sometimes six months elapse without a single visiter. Most of those whose signatures I have seen are English or Germans. Here, my friend, is a copy of the names of some, with the observations appended to each : I transcribe them without remark. It will be sufficient to read what they have written, in order to form a judgment of their sentiments and opinions : —

"Eucher Eloy, French naturalist, coming from Egypt and going to Mount Lebanon and Constantinople, thence to Persia, and finally to Russia, the 21st of April, 1831."

"On the 9th of September, 1823, arrived here, not to see Mount Sinai, but for an object of utility, Fred. Burckhardt and Charles Falkenstein, from Holstein, with Martin Bretzkec from Moravia."

"Joseph Lane arrived on the 7th of September, 1828, to visit this interesting country. It was his intention to ascend Sinai at once, and to stay only a few days ; but the great fatigues which he has undergone, and the unwholesome waters which he drank while crossing the desert, have made him so ill that he cannot leave the monastery till his health permits."

“At Mount Sinai, at Mount St. Bernard in Europe, I have received the kindest hospitality. In the Alps, among the catholic monks, my name caused me to be taken for a Protestant; in Asia, among Greek monks, I was known to be of the catholic religion: a liberal, sublime religion, which teaches men to practise such toleration, such charity.

“June 19th, 1830.

“Baron Taylor.”

“R. Moresby, commander of the East India Company's ship *Palinurus*, Nander, lieutenant, H. Mooring, surgeon, J. T. Jones, of the Marines, visited these parts so interesting for a Christian, and read the Decalogue on the most elevated point, where, it is said, the Law was given to Moses.”

“Dr. William Holt Kater, of London, arrived at this convent, in company with Mr. Bradford, on the 5th of October, 1829; and left it on the 8th, to go to Cairo, and thence to Syria. They have been exceedingly gratified with their sojourn in this interesting country. The world is a kind of book, of which he has read but the first page who has seen no other than his native land.”

“This is the third time that I have been at this monastery.

“April 15th, 1826.

“Martin Bretzkec.”

“Captain Don Manuel Valdes Alquer, in the service of H. M. Ferdinand VII. King of Spain and the Indies, visited these holy places with the liveliest pleasure in

the month of February, 1824. He confesses that, with great admiration, he has deeply felt in his soul the marvellous things which it pleased God to do by the hand of his servant Moses.

“Long live the king, whose subject I am !”

“J. Cohen, of the United States of America, arrived at the convent on the 4th of September, 1832; and left it on the 7th, to proceed to Syria, through the desert leading to Gaza. He has been visiting the four quarters of the globe, has ascended Mount Sinai, and been kindly received by the inmates of the monastery.”

Adieu, my friend; my next letter will conduct you with me to the top of Sinai.

LETTER LIII.

DEPARTURE FOR SINAI — ICE AND SNOW — CHAPEL DEDICATED TO THE PROPHET ELIJAH — TOP OF SINAI — RUINS OF CHURCHES — MOSQUE — CLIFT OF THE ROCK, IN WHICH MOSES WAS PLACED TILL THE GLORY OF THE LORD PASSED BY — MOUNT ST. CATHERINE — RETURN TO THE MONASTERY — VALLEY OF REPHIDIM — MOULD OF THE GOLDEN CALF — ROCK FROM WHICH MOSES PRODUCED WATER — EXCAVATIONS FORMED BY THE WATER IN THE ROCK — EXCURSION IN THE DESERT SURROUNDING HOREB AND SINAI — PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE — LAST CONVERSATION WITH THE SUPERIOR.

Cairo, March 27th, 1833.

My journey in the Desert, my dear friend, had so fatigued me, and my legs were so stiff from the position in which I was obliged to keep them while upon my dromedary, that I could not walk without great difficulty. After some days' rest at the monastery, I could not think with-

out apprehension that, to reach Sinai, I had yet to climb steep rocks, without the slightest trace of a road. However, I mustered courage, and determined to conquer all obstacles, even though I were obliged to climb by the aid of my hands. On the 1st of March, at daybreak, I set out for the holy mountain, accompanied by a monk, an Arab, and my janissary.

The ascent commences about four hundred paces from the monastery. It is extremely rough, steep, and the more fatiguing, inasmuch as it is composed, in a manner, of nothing but slabs of foliated porphyry and sharp fragments of rocks. We had, moreover, to encounter heaps of ice ; and the snow, in some places, was so deep that it was a real labour for us to clear a passage through it. After ascending for an hour, I could go no farther. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, and a very cold wind which was blowing, I was bathed in perspiration, so that I was glad to have recourse to the snow to cool and refresh me. Never do I recollect to have felt such lassitude. However, the recollections, the thoughts, of my faith came to my succour ; they prevented me from yielding to the feeling of my weakness, and my efforts increased in proportion to the obstacles.

All around us looked dull and dreary ; all was solitude and silence ; not a trace of verdure upon the blocks of granite that rose above the ice and snow by which we were surrounded.

Midway we came to a chapel dedicated to the prophet Elijah, and in which is the cave where he lodged, after journeying forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God.

“And he came thither,” says the Scripture, “unto a cave, and lodged there; and behold the word of the Lord came unto him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?”

“And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts : for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away.

“And he said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; but the Lord was not in the wind : and after the wind an earthquake ; but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

“And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire : and after the fire a still small voice.

“And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering of the cave ; and behold there came a voice unto him and said, What doest thou here, Elijah ?

“And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts : because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.” (I Kings, xix.)

I know not, my dear friend, whether it has ever been the lot of any of those scholars and men of science, who have the misfortune to neglect, to despise, the important science of salvation, and to prefer to it the vain knowledge upon which pride feasts itself, that knowledge which can

be of service for a few moments only in the rapid course of life — I know not, I say, if it has ever been their lot to climb Mount Horeb, to visit the cave of Elijah, with Bible in hand, to read there the words which I have just placed before you, and to confront them with the present state of the surrounding scene, with the rent mountains, with the rocks cloven, broken in pieces, thrown down ; but if such has been their lot, if indifference or incredulity has left ever so little honesty and sincerity at the bottom of their soul, I doubt if, after reading this passage — if, after such confrontation, they can help paying homage to the truth, by exclaiming : —

Yes, the Lord hath passed by ;

And a great and strong wind hath rent the mountains,
and broken in pieces the rocks before the Lord ;

And after the wind an earthquake ;

And after the earthquake a fire.

The astonishment, the awe, which seized me at so grand a sight, was succeeded by an agreeable surprise. Before the chapel of the prophet, amidst bare and sterile rocks, we saw a magnificent cypress majestically lifting its head to the height of forty feet at least. As I was very weary, I rested myself for a moment at its foot.

From the cave of Elijah we continued our arduous ascent over the snow, against a north wind, which blew with violence. At length, the sight of the venerable summit revived my courage, and seemed to impart new strength. In another hour, all my wishes were gratified. My soul, in the transports of a joy which effaced all impression of the long fatigues of the journey, forgot the entire world, to dwell deliciously upon these thoughts : —

“ I am on that sacred mount, where the Lord came to Moses in a thick cloud, ‘ that the people might hear when the Lord spoke with him, and believe him for ever ;’ on those very rocks where, ‘ in the morning there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud ;’ on that Sinai, which ‘ was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly ;’ on that Sinai, where, ‘ when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake and God answered him by a voice.’ ” (Exod. xix.)

And, overcome with religious awe, I knelt down : my lips were pressed to the holy rock, and long did I remain prostrate, adoring in silence the infinitely merciful God, who, out of love to Israel, had deigned to come down from the heavens to Sinai, to give his law : and, after humbly thanking Him for the continual blessings with which his bounty had accompanied my pilgrimage, with uncovered head, my hand upon my heart, and my eyes uplifted to heaven, I pronounced aloud those words which he spake : “ I am the Lord thy God,” &c. Not a sound interrupted my voice, which was wafted over the rocks of that profound solitude : all nature seemed to listen in silence to the oracles of its divine Author !

On the summit of Sinai are seen the ruins of two Christian churches, one of which was called the church of the Transfiguration. There is also a mosque erected by the Turks in honour of the lawgiver of the Hebrews, for whom they entertain such veneration that they never call the mountain by any other name than Gibel Mousa, which signifies the mountain of Moses.

But of all the objects which the aspect of Sinai presents to the astonished eye, none strikes it more forcibly than that which reminds the spectator of the following passage in Exodus :—

“ And Moses said unto the Lord Wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? .So shall we be separated, I and thy people from all the people that are on the face of the earth.

“ And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

“ And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

“ And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

“ And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live.

“ And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock.

“ And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock; and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by.” (Exod. xxxiii. 16—22.)

Now, my dear friend, this clift in the rock in which Moses was put, where the hand of the Lord covered him till his glory passed by, subsists to this day; it is still easy to be recognized four thousand years after the circumstance recorded by the inspired historian. There is not a traveller but may see it: my eyes have seen, have

contemplated it, and my mind, in unison with my heart, paying homage to the veracity of the holy Scriptures, thanked Heaven for the privilege of being permitted to take a close view of that which for so many others must be an object of faith.

The ruins of the churches have somewhat raised the borders of the "clift," but they are easily distinguished from the rock, which is a very hard granite. I entered it, and remained there some time; and with a stout hammer it took me nearly half an hour to break off a few small fragments.

I had carried with me an excellent telescope, and reckoned upon the pleasure of exploring the wide-extended prospect. I committed this instrument for a few minutes to the care of the monk who accompanied me. While I was engaged in knocking off the bits of granite, he was curious to see what was inside, and employed force; the lenses were broken, so that it was totally useless. You must have been in a similar position to that in which I found myself, to be able to conceive the vexation which this accident occasioned me. It affected me the more because I had no means of repairing the mischief.

Opposite to Sinai is Mount St. Catherine, whose summit, loftier than any of that chain of mountains, rises to the height of 8,452 feet above the level of the Red Sea. A rock is there to be seen on which, it is said, there is the impression of the body of the saint, which lay there for several centuries. It is frequently visited by Russian and Greek pilgrims, and sometimes even by women. I must have sacrificed a day had I gone thither.

The bad state of the roads, worse than those which I had already traversed, the cold, the ice, the snow, the wind, all contributed to induce me to relinquish the design.

I passed three hours on Sinai, and, like the apostles on Tabor, Lord, said I, it is good to be here, and I would fain have pitched a tent there. My guide and the good monk apprized me that we must think of returning. Several times they had to repeat this warning, and I, falling once more on my knees, promised God to be faithful to him, vowed to "have no other gods before him," and we departed.

It had taken us four hours to ascend : we performed the descent in three. I arrived at the monastery much less fatigued than I had expected.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, I went down from the convent with the monk who was directed to accompany me. He took me to the valley of Rephidim, to the place of the Temptation, as it is called, to show me the miraculous rock, from which Moses caused water to gush forth by striking it with his rod.

"And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim ; and there was no water for the people to drink.

"Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide you with me ? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord ?

"And the people thirsted there for water ; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is

this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

“ And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

“ And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river take in thine hand and go.

“ Behold I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

“ And he called the name of the place Massah, (that is, temptation) and Meribah, (chiding or strife) because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord with us or not?” (Exod. xvii.)

By the way we stopped at a rock, in which my guide showed me a hole that, he said, is, according to tradition, the mould of the golden calf, cast by Aaron for the Israelites while Moses was on Sinai. Father Sicard, who examined this hole very closely, and measured all its proportions, expressly says that he remarked in it the figure, not of an entire calf, but of the head with the muzzle and the horns; and it is true that even to this day you may perceive some resemblance to it. But one serious objection, that gives rise to doubts on this point, which to me appears very reasonable, is that this pretended mould, hollowed out of granite, being three feet in diameter, and as much in depth, we must suppose that the entire calf had the colossal proportions of an

elephant, an inference that would scarcely harmonize with the Scripture account.

The rock which tradition designates as that from which Moses caused water to burst forth presents characters of truth far more striking. I know not that I have ever seen in my life monuments verifying, in a more convincing manner, the facts of antiquity which they commemorate. Figure to yourself, upon a dry, sterile soil, destitute of plants of every kind, and in the environs of which not a drop of water is to be found — figure to yourself, I say, a prodigious block of granite, fourteen or fifteen feet high, ten wide, and fifty at least in circumference, detached from the mountain, and lying in the valley, among other considerable fragments of rocks, which in the course of ages the hand of Time has loosened and hurled down.

“This rock,” says a traveller who has visited the spot, and whose philosophic opinions leave no room to suspect him of a wish to favour revelation, “this rock has, in its vertical surface, a gutter about ten inches wide, and three and a half deep, crossed by ten or twelve channels about two inches deep, formed by water resting on the softest part of this block, which the monks and the Arabs call the ‘rock of Moses.’”

This description, I admit, is perfectly correct; excepting that the words *in the softest part* are inaccurate. The block, on the contrary, is so hard all over, that, after redoubled blows for a whole hour, we could scarcely break off a few small fragments: the hammer that we used was of iron, and very strong; it was, nevertheless, bent, from the resistance it met with.

A more remarkable circumstance, not mentioned by the author whom I have just quoted, is that to this day the spot where this rock stands is called by the Arabs Massal and Meribab, names nearly the same as those of Massah and Meribah, assigned to it in the Hebrew Scripture, and signifying *strife* and *temptation*.

The Bedouins attribute a miraculous virtue to the excavations which the water has formed in the granite of the rock ; they lay upon them the grass which they go far and near to collect, before they give it to their camels when those animals are ailing.

On my return to the monastery, when I had to place myself in the ring of the rope by which one is hoisted up, I could not suppress the same apprehensions that I had felt on the first day—apprehensions which were renewed whenever I had occasion to ascend or descend. If the man who turns the windlass to which the rope is attached were to let go, if the rope were to break, or if you did not hold fast, or should happen to faint, it would be all over with you.

I spent part of the 3rd in exploring the desert surrounding Mount Horeb and Sinai—a desert formerly inhabited by thousands of anchorites. I was accompanied by Father John of Cephalonia, my usual guide, and Father Neophyte of Candia : the latter understood Greek only, and unluckily neither of them was capable of satisfying me on the points that most interested my curiosity. I should have been glad to learn from their lips the minutest details tending to make me better acquainted with a land of wonders, which exhibits in every thing so strange a character ; but I could obtain from them

no more than what is related by most of the Christian travellers, and was obliged to content myself with noting my own particular impressions. I had already observed those masses of scattered rocks, and those mother-rocks, from which they were detached, cloven and ready to suffer other masses still more enormous to escape from their bosoms ; and, contemplating them anew, anew I found myself filled with awe. All around me produced feelings of melancholy and terror. Silent beside the two monks, who themselves surveyed with emotion that scene to which, nevertheless, their eyes were accustomed, methought I was witnessing the first throes of that convulsion of Nature, which, as the sacred Scriptures inform us, will mark the last days of the world : and, to banish the terrors excited by this idea, I had need to recollect that the glory of the Lord had passed there ; that there it had been manifested to Israel ; that there had been published the holy law ; that there, amidst the fearful concomitants of that promulgation, lightnings had made the mountains smoke, and rent their bowels.

I then climbed the Horeb, and tarried a long time on the spot where Moses is said to have stood when he saw the burning bush. The prospect from that point is admirable, and not to be compared with any other. I had on my left Mount Sinai, majestically lifting its sacred summit to the skies ; about half a league below me, in a deep and narrow valley, I beheld, as though at my feet, the *fortress* of the monastery of the Transfiguration, the despair of the Arab, who covets what it contains, while measuring with disappointed look the walls which to him are inaccessible ; farther off, in the garden of the

convent, my eye fell upon the lofty cypresses, whose verdure renders the bare rocks surrounding the monastery, and projecting their enormous flanks into the desert, still more dreary: on the right, the view extended over the country, traversed by the children of Israel when they came to Mount Sinai; over the plain in which they encamped when God gave his law to Moses; and, beyond that plain, covered with yellow and withered bushes, over the vast amphitheatre of mountains by which it is bounded.

Seated on the rock, I gave free scope to my thoughts: memory rapidly reviewed both the miracles of the loving kindness of God to his people, and the prodigies of ingratitude of that same gross and carnal-minded people: never had I so strongly felt the enormity of the backslidings of Israel, which turned to idolatry at the foot of these mountains. I saw amidst the camp the sacrilegious altar erected by Aaron; I saw the abominable idol, and the victims, and the holocausts offered to it; and the multitude forgetting the Lord, who had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, some sitting down to eat and to drink, others joining in senseless rejoicings, in impure dances. I beheld Moses hastily descending from Sinai, breaking the tables of the law in the transports of a holy indignation, and the sons of Levi, armed with swords, passing and repassing through the camp, from gate to gate, slaying, every man, his brother, his companion, his neighbour; I heard the cries of the guilty falling beneath their strokes. And, at the same time that I recognized in this spectacle the justice of the divine vengeance, I was confounded at the excessive

blindness and ingratitude which could overlook the most signal, the most recent, benefits ; and, in order to understand so strange a mystery, I felt impelled to fall back upon myself, to sound the wickedness of my own heart, till I was forced to acknowledge that, still more ungrateful, after favours not less signal conferred by the Lord, it had but too often adored strange gods, the gods whom the world adores ; happy to have found, on the day of my repentance, in the hands of the Levites of the new law, instead of the sword that slays, the cross of my Saviour, his mercy, and my pardon.

On the 4th, my camels having arrived, I occupied myself almost exclusively with preparations for my departure. In the morning, I went to the chapel of the burning bush, and then passed a few moments before the tomb of St. Catherine. The monks were performing the service. While at my prayers, my attention was diverted by an angelic voice, whose sweet and harmonious tones formed a striking contrast with the singing of the other ecclesiastics. I thought that I could discover in its execution the style of the Italian school, favoured by a supple and sonorous organ ; and I was the more struck by it, because nothing is more uncommon among the Greeks of these countries. On leaving the church, I asked one of the Fathers who was the singer that had so delighted me. "There he is," replied he, pointing to a person a few paces from us. "But," added he, with some asperity, "he had better hold his tongue, or conform to the custom of the community for divine service." Now, you must know, my dear friend, to judge from what I have heard, it is the custom of the community to

sing with a nasal twang, which has a most disagreeable effect. I made an effort of politeness to avoid showing that I was of a different opinion.

In the evening, I took leave of the community, nearly all the members of which were assembled. Their number is from forty-five to fifty : among them are several from seventy to eighty years old, but who are so hale and healthy that they appear to be scarcely forty : the oldest is ninety-six, and shows all the vigour of youth. So excellent is his sight that he reads without spectacles, and, in the duties which he performs, he is a model of activity and punctuality to his brethren. This soundness of constitution arises not only from the tranquillity, the simplicity, the regularity of life, observable in all these communities, but also from the purity of the air which is breathed in these parts. Some of the Fathers, however, have rather exaggerated notions on this subject : they assured me that if a person infected with the plague were to enter their house, he would not communicate the disease to any of its inmates. I know not whether they have ever made the experiment. My incredulity betrayed itself in a smile, which only excited pity. For the rest, all of them accepted in the kindest manner the expression of my gratitude for the hospitable attentions which I had received from them.

In a last conversation with the superior, after having more particularly expressed my thanks to him, I ventured to ask two or three questions of interest concerning his community. I had read somewhere or other that there is an Arabic printing-office in the convent : I inquired if this was the case, but he replied

that the statement was erroneous. I adverted to the considerable expence that must be occasioned by the keeping up of so many buildings belonging to the monastery, the church, with its thirty chapels, their ornaments, &c.; and I declared my astonishment that he could provide for every thing. He entered complaisantly into the detail of the numerous resources afforded him by the devotion to St. Catherine, a devotion universally prevalent among the Greeks; he told me that donations arrived from very remote countries, even from India; and, after a long enumeration, he added, with emphasis: "Our walls might be of gold, if we had all that the piety of our brethren has sent us, and that the violence of the Arabs has wrung from us." He related to me, on this occasion, that, very recently, before Mehemet Ali seized the throne of Egypt, the monastery was exposed to daily vexations, from which very often the monks themselves suffered not less than their funds. Several fell victims to their devotedness to the interests of the house, and are considered as martyrs; their remains are deposited in a particular chapel.

The monks make no charge whatever for the hospitality which they afford to pilgrims and travellers, but they reckon upon a donation, and I have not heard that in this expectation they have ever been disappointed. On writing my name in the Strangers' book, I put down my tribute, much less in conformity to the custom than from a deep sense of the attentions, the civilities, and the respect, which had been paid me.

LETTER LIV.

DEPARTURE FROM THE MONASTERY OF ST. CATHERINE—BRUTALITY OF THE JANISSARY TO A POOR BEDOUIN—CAMEL-DRIVERS—HURRICANE—REMARKABLE ECHO—INDISPOSITION—THE RED SEA—LOSS OF A CRUCIFIX—PASSAGE ACROSS THE ARM OF THE SEA OPPOSITE TO SUEZ—MAHOMETAN PILGRIMS GOING TO MECCA—OPTICAL PHENOMENON CALLED MIRAGE—ARRIVAL AT CAIRO—DEPARTURE OF THE CARAVAN FOR MECCA—THE CAMEL.

Cairo, March 30, 1833.

I left the monastery of the Transfiguration very early in the morning of the 5th of March, and not without regret. Father John of Cephalonia, and Father Neophyte of Candia, from whom I had already received so many marks of kindness, insisted on doing me the honour to accompany me to the distance of a league from the convent.

No sooner had I loosed the rope by which I was let down, than I was surrounded by Bedouins begging alms. To get rid of the most importunate of them, Mahomet, my janissary, gave him a thump on the head. I warmly reproved him for it, and ordered him, by way of reparation, to carry himself a few pieces of money, in my name, to the person whom he had struck: he hesitated for a moment, but finally obeyed.

The same camel-drivers who had brought me were there, and eagerly offered their services to take me back. They had become attached to me during the former journey, and would have been much vexed if others who also applied to me had been chosen in their stead. I gave them the preference the more willingly, because, setting aside the annoyance occasioned at first by their

everlasting clack—a fault which, as I have told you, one finds in all the Arabs—I had every reason to be satisfied with their conduct. They persuaded me to take for the return another and a longer route, but, according to them, a better than that by which we had come to Mount Sinai. I soon began to think that I should not have so much cause to congratulate myself upon the change as they pretended: rocks, stones, sand, a few camels wandering about in quest of a scanty subsistence — this was all that we saw during the first days.

The 6th was a very harassing day. We proceeded ten leagues directly in the teeth of a most furious wind. I had the greatest difficulty to keep my seat on my dromedary, and my hat was torn to tatters. Mahomet, notwithstanding his skill, had like to have been dismounted, and for a time I thought that we should not be able to resist the violence of the hurricane. It was still worse in the evening, when I attempted to pitch my tent: ten times it was blown away, and carried to the distance of forty or fifty paces; nor did I succeed in fixing it at last till I retired under the shelter of a rock, at some distance from the place chosen by my people on account of the bushes. To increase our discomfort, it was impossible either for them or me to make a fire. It was not till the night was far advanced that the gale abated.

Next morning, on awaking, great was my surprise when, having called my Bedouins, I heard an echo—the very finest, perhaps, that ever struck my ear—repeat my words most distinctly. It gave me the greater pleasure, inasmuch as the effect was wholly unexpected, and,

instead of calling my men a second time, I began to cry in the joyousness of my heart: "Jesus! Mary! Joseph!" And the echo, repeating the slightest inflexion of my voice, responded, "Jesus! Mary! Joseph!"

Transported with delight to hear a Mussulman rock keep chorus, and wishing to prolong so exquisite a pleasure, I commenced the *Salve Regina* at the top of my voice, and sang it from beginning to end; the echo singing along with me, and sending my words afar over the desert, with admirable fidelity. My Bedouins listened in silent astonishment; they seemed to share my ecstasy, and, that they might not interrupt it, instead of coming to me, they waited patiently until I rejoined them.

On the 9th, I felt much more fatigued than usual. I was afraid that I should not be able to proceed, but be obliged to halt before the accustomed hour. It was only with great exertion that I reached the place where we were to pass the night. My people lost no time in preparing my tent: I had a paroxysm of fever, with palpitation of the heart. Apprehensive lest I should be incapable of continuing my journey, my mind was filled with anxiety: I sorrowfully asked myself what would become of me, if I were to grow worse, if I were to be laid up, far from all assistance, left alone to the mercy of a few Arabs, amidst a desert. Then remembering me of our Father who is in heaven, I returned to better thoughts; I adored his holy will, I committed myself with confidence to his hands, and he granted me the grace to comprehend that, for a monk whom his vows have for ever separated from the world, there is not less happiness, and there may be more glory, in dying on pilgrimage upon the sand of a desert

than in yielding up his soul upon straw and ashes, amidst the attentions and the prayers of his surrounding brethren. Night brought some rest : at dawn the fever had ceased ; I found my strength recruited, and gave orders for our departure. In the afternoon, at a moment when, engrossed by the recollections of the preceding day, I was thinking of any thing but what was before me, I perceived the Red Sea, which I supposed to be yet at a great distance. To my heart this sight was like dew to the dry and parched soil : it refreshed, it soothed it ; my pains were lightened, and the day's journey was performed with much less difficulty than I had expected.

Very early on the following morning, I took two of my Bedouins, and, armed to the teeth, I set out with them, impatient to reach the sea-shore that same day. I had directed Mahomet, who was to come after me with the camels, to wait for me at the Springs of Moses, where I intended to rejoin him, and to pass the night. The sand fatigued our beasts exceedingly ; in some places they sank up to the middle of the leg : we nevertheless arrived betimes at the shore. I immediately alighted, and hastened to pick up the finest shells. At the moment of starting again, I missed the crucifix which I constantly carried about me. Had I left it behind, in the morning, when packing up my baggage ? — had I dropped it by the way ? — had it been stolen ? — I knew not what to think. I could not help feeling this loss very severely : it affected me to such a degree as to make me forget every thing else. For many years it was at the foot of this crucifix that I poured forth all my troubles ; it was my support in illness, my dearest companion in travel, my

comfort, my happiness. I had frequently lost, but always recovered it; and the last time, having left it at the Holy Sepulchre, it had been sent after me to Jaffa. On the present occasion, I had the less hope of seeing it again, as I might have dropped it in the sands, and it might, perhaps, have already fallen into the hands of some Arab. I lost no time in rejoining the Bedouins of my caravan. I called them together around me, and informed them of the loss that I had sustained; adding, that my crucifix was not of gold, as some might have imagined; that, not supposing any of them capable of stealing it, I should send in search of it, but that, if it were not found, I should know what measure I had to take. After this address, I despatched the one in whom I had most confidence, with orders to follow the track which we had taken, to go back to the spot where my tent had been pitched, and thence to proceed to Suez, where I would wait for him. He immediately set out, taking with him water and provisions for two days.

Scarcely was he gone before a young negro who travelled with us came and earnestly solicited permission to accompany him, and to assist him in the search. This application appeared extraordinary: less than that would have sufficed to awaken my suspicions. I might, in my turn, have asked his permission to examine his pockets; but I deemed it more Christian-like to give him his share of the provisions, and to let him go: from that moment, however, I had no doubt that I should recover my crucifix.

We passed the night at the Springs of Moses, where we found, as on our former visit, a great number of

Bedouins. The weather was dreadful ; we had wind and rain for the greatest part of the night.

At daybreak, the camel-drivers who had charge of my baggage started, by my direction, to make the circuit of the isthmus by land ; while I, to spare two hours' journey, resolved to cross the arm of the sea opposite to Suez. I luckily met with a bark laden with skins full of water, which was going to the town, but she lay at some distance from the shore, and could not approach any nearer. I was obliged to submit to be carried on board. The Arabs concluding from my dromedary that I was a person of distinction, and reckoning in consequence upon a handsome *bakschisch*, gladly took me upon their shoulders, and carried me in triumph through the water, shouting and singing with all their might, raising and lowering me, according to the cadence of their melody, and caring little whether, in these alternate movements, they plunged my clothes into the water or not. You may judge how impatient I was to be released from their grasp ; indeed, I did not breathe freely till I was on board the bark.

At Suez I found an extraordinary concourse of Mahometan pilgrims, who had come thither to embark for Tor, and to proceed thence to Mecca. The streets were encumbered with tents, camels, and baggage. The curious crowd was struck by my costume ; several eyed me with a look of fear ; others kept pace with me for a longer or a shorter distance ; while some even followed me to the house of M. Manoula, agent to the East India Company, where I alighted, and where I was received with great cordiality.

The Bedouin and the Negro who had gone in search of my crucifix had not arrived : I was obliged to sacrifice the following day in waiting for them. In the morning, taking advantage of the ebb-tide, I went with my host, my janissary, and two fishermen, to pick up more shells and beautiful sea-crabs on the beach, which was left dry by the receding water. In the afternoon, my men arrived. They had had a very long excursion, following as closely as possible, sometimes together, at others separately, the traces of our camels ; and the negro, in one of the moments when he was alone, had been lucky enough to find upon the sand the object to which I attached such value. This at least was his story, which the Bedouin had the good-nature to attest on the report of his companion. More incredulous myself, I put the less faith in this account, as I had beforehand discovered the combination and its results : still, as on such occasions it may be dangerous to suffer the person who has forfeited his own esteem to perceive that he must no longer reckon upon that of another, instead of revealing to him all that I thought, I chose rather to affect a belief in his honesty, and to punish him only by awarding to him no other recompense but thanks, persuaded that the reproaches of his conscience would not permit him to charge me with ingratitude.

Impatient to reach Cairo, I left Suez on the 13th, at four in the morning, and hastened our march as much as possible. One new circumstance alone struck me in this trip : this was the optical phenomenon to which natural philosophers give the appellation of *mirage*, a phenomenon which produced upon me, as it does upon all

who are unacquainted with it, an extraordinary effect, that it is difficult to describe. On the 14th, in the forenoon, the sandy plain of the desert, at a certain distance, appeared to be transformed into an immense and boundless sea. As we advanced, the trees, the houses, the villages, all the objects which rose at a distance above the surface of the soil, seemed to float in this ocean, whose waters fled at our approach : and the illusion was so complete, so strong, so like reality, that, but for the aid of reflexion, I could not possibly have guarded myself against the erroneous impression made upon my senses. To the traveller, harassed by fatigue, parched by the heat of the sun, and panting with thirst, this deceitful appearance sometimes becomes a cruel aggravation of his torments. A new Tantalus, he beholds what he takes to be water receding before him with the more rapidity the more he exerts himself to reach it, in the hope of quenching his thirst.

At length, on the 15th, after a march of sixteen hours, we arrived at Cairo. The whole city was in commotion. It was the day of the departure of the great caravan for Mecca : there was universal rejoicing. The carpet which the capital of Egypt is accustomed to send annually to the tomb of the Prophet was carried in procession through the different quarters of the city ; and everywhere, even at the gate by which we had to enter, the crowd was immense. My janissary, with his silver-knobbed cane, threatened to no purpose. We despaired of being able to proceed, when the Egyptian officer on guard, perceiving our embarrassment, detached a few soldiers who cleared a passage for us. When we had got out of the

crowd, I directed Mahomet to take the least frequented streets, but still it was not without difficulty that we proceeded to the monastery of the Franciscan Fathers. I had the good fortune to find there the Austrian vice-consul and numerous friends, who, glad to see me again, congratulated me on the success of a journey in which they had taken a warm interest, and loaded me with tokens of civility and friendship.

I will not conclude the account of my peregrinations in the desert, without fixing your thoughts for a few moments on one of the wonders of the divine goodness, of which I have not yet treated; but which, ever since my departure from Cairo, my gratitude has not missed celebrating for a single day, and which will ever occupy a place among my fondest recollections. It is the wonder exhibited by the camel to every one who has closely observed that animal, to every one who has had opportunity to study its destination, and to learn, were it only from the experience of a few days, of what importance it is to the people of the East. Among all the species of animals subjected to the will of man, there is not one which shows in a more striking manner that paternal Providence which has been pleased to proportion its gifts to human wants; to adapt the beasts of burden, their shape, their size, their strength, their way of life, in short, all their qualities, not excepting even their colour, to the countries for which they are made, and to the different purposes to which they are destined to be applied. A hundred times, while thinking of the man who has the misfortune not to recognize the Author of all things in his works—a hundred times have I inwardly said: Oh!

if that man could but see what I have seen, how would he admire what I admire ! And, if ever so little of that light which enables us to perceive causes in their effects were left in his mind ; if ever so little of that disposition of every upright and honest heart to love that which is good were left in his heart—how would he, at sight of the camel and its manifold utility, turn from the wretched sophistries of a vain and ungrateful science, to lift himself to God, to pay homage to his power, his wisdom, and his goodness, to adore, to glorify, and to bless Him !

Endued with the qualities most suitable to the climate in which he is placed, the camel is to the Arab a more inestimable treasure than the riches, the gold, and the silks of the East. Accordingly, the Arab calls him the holy, the sacred animal, and is attached to him with a fondness mingled with respect : he knows that without this servant he could neither clothe himself, nor travel, nor traffick, nor even live. “ Figure to yourself,” says Buffon, “ a country without verdure, without water, a scorching sun, a sky ever serene, sandy plains, mountains still more arid, over which the eye wanders without being able to descry any living object—a country inanimate, and flayed, as it were, by the winds—exhibiting nought but bones, loose scattered stones, rocks standing or overturned, a desert entirely bare, where traveller never rested in the shade, where nothing accompanies him, where nothing reminds him of living Nature ; an absolute solitude, a thousand times more awful than that of forests, for trees themselves are beings to the man who finds himself alone ; more isolated, more forlorn, more lost, in these limitless wastes, he everywhere sees space

as his grave ; the light of day, more dismal than the shades of night, returns only to show his nakedness, his impotence, and to display to him the horror of his situation, cut off by the abyss of immensity from the habitable earth ; an immensity which he would in vain attempt to traverse — for hunger, thirst, and scorching heat, divide all the moments that are left him between despair and death.

“ And yet, with the assistance of the camel, the Arab has found means to pass and to appropriate to himself these chasms of Nature, which afford him an asylum, ensure his quiet, and maintain his independence.”

And yet, with the assistance of the camel, the philosopher of the temperate climates or even of the cold regions of the north, relieved from the dread of cruel privations, of insurmountable obstacles, has been enabled to pursue his inquiries for the benefit of science amid the burning sands of the deserts and the rocks of its mountains, to explore remarkable places, to determine their position, to measure their extent, or to calculate their height.

And yet, with the assistance of the camel, for visiting the sacred summits of mountains where the voice of God was heard of old, the humble pilgrim, frequently without any other resource than the tribute of charity which he has collected by the way, has been enabled to pursue the same tracks free from the apprehension of being burned by the sun, or, after experiencing the torments of parching thirst and consuming hunger, encountering a death of excruciating agony.

And I too, my dear friend, with the assistance of the camel, notwithstanding the weight of years, notwith-

standing the debility of a constitution worn down by the toils and troubles of a long agitated life — I too have been enabled happily to accomplish my pilgrimage, and to escape all dangers.

If I were here to repeat to you, my good friend, what has been written upon the camel by the most celebrated travellers, and even by such of them in whom the contemplation of the works of the creation is least likely to awaken thoughts of the God by whom they exist, you would be surprised to see how, struck by the evidence of the gift, they have praised, extolled the bounty of Providence which has placed so valuable a quadruped at the service of man. But I prefer laying before you what has been said on the subject by one of the philosophers of our times, known for his hatred of Christianity and its doctrines; you will there see with still greater astonishment how he has been forced to speak — he, a writer whom the mere idea of God annoys; who, lest he should awaken that idea in the mind of his readers, avoids the mention of Him, and yet shows in spite of himself how he is haunted by it, in the care which he takes to substitute everywhere the name of *Nature* for that of its Author, to transfer to the one the power and intelligence of the other; as if the word *Nature*, taken in an absolute manner in such a signification, were not the most absurd and the most senseless that exists in any language whatever.

“ In those tracts of the desert, where the soil is rocky and sandy,” says Volney, “ the rains cause the seeds of the wild plants to sprout, reanimate the bushes, the ranunculuses, the wormwoods, the kalis, and form in the bottoms spots upon which reeds and grasses spring forth.

The plain then assumes a smiling look of verdure ; it is the season of abundance for the cattle and their owners ; but, on the return of the heats, every thing is dried up, and the soil, dusty and of a grayish colour, affords nothing but dry stalks as hard as wood, which neither horses nor even goats can chew. In this state the desert would be uninhabitable, and man would be forced to leave it, if *Nature* had not attached to it an animal with a constitution as strong and habits as frugal as the soil is sterile and ungrateful — if *she* had not placed there the camel. *No animal exhibits so marked and so exclusive an adaptation to its climate ; one would say that a PREMEDITATED INTENTION has been pleased to regulate the qualities of the one by those of the other. Destining* the camel to inhabit a country where he should find but little food, *Nature* has economized matter in his whole construction. She has not given to him the plumpness of form either of the ox, or of the horse, or of the elephant ; but, confining him to what is strictly necessary, *she* has placed a small head without ears at the end of a long, fleshless neck ; she has withheld from his legs and thighs every muscle not absolutely requisite for moving them ; lastly, *she* has given to his spare body only those vessels and tendons that are necessary for binding its frame together. *She* has furnished him with a strong jaw for masticating the hardest food, but, lest he should consume too much, *she* has made his stomach small and obliged him to ruminate. *She* has provided his foot with a fleshy cushion, which, slipping upon mud, and being unfit for climbing, allows him to travel only on a dry, smooth, and sandy soil, like that of Arabia ; lastly, *she* has evidently destined him for

slavery, by denying him every sort of defence against his enemies. Destitute of the horns of the bull, the hoof of the horse, the tusks of the elephant, and the speed of the stag, what has the camel to withstand the attacks of the lion, the tiger, or even the wolf? Hence, in order to preserve the species, *Nature* hides him in the bosom of vast deserts, where the scantiness of the vegetation attracts no game, and the want of game keeps away voracious animals. It was requisite that the sword of the tyrant should drive man from the inhabited earth, in order to cause the camel to lose his liberty. In passing to the domestic state he is become the means of dwelling on the most ungrateful soil; he alone supplies all the wants of his owners: the milk of the she-camel feeds the Arab family under the various forms of curd, cheese, and butter; and frequently his flesh too is eaten. Shoes and harness are made of his hide, garments and tents of his hair. By his means heavy loads are conveyed from place to place. Lastly, when the earth refuses forage to the horse, so valuable to the Bedouin, the camel supplies the want by its milk, at the cost of only a few stalks of brambles or wormwood, or some pounded date-kernels. Such is the importance of the camel for the desert, that, were he to be withdrawn from it, the whole population of which he is the sole pivot would be banished from it too."

Such are the observations on the camel of one who carefully kept aloof from his thoughts and his pen the very name of God, as too alarming for his pride; and who thought to deliver himself and to deliver others from all fear and from all remorse, by teaching that

“ faith and hope are ideas without reality, the virtues of dupes ; that charity is an exaggeration, and prayer a corruption of morality.”

Grave and serious as is the camel when at a certain age, so playful and frolicsome is he when young. We had one three weeks old, which followed its dam : it was full of fun, a real wag. We were excellent friends. It played with me, and I played with it. When I tried to approach it, it would skip away, and be gone in a moment : if I pretended not to notice or to drive it, the little creature would immediately come to provoke me. The dam was most attentive and affectionate : while she was suckling, nothing in the world could have parted her from her young one, or made her stir : she saw nothing else ; she forgot hunger and thirst, in order to tend it. Witnessing every day these demonstrations of maternal love, how could I help exclaiming with a feeling of admiration : O providence of my God !

The dromedary differs from the camel only in this, that its form is lighter, its legs smaller, its hair finer. Mine, like all of its species, in the long run, surpasses in speed the best Arabian horse. While travelling, I was never tired of admiring him. Once, in order to quicken his pace, I was going to strike him, but my hand refused to obey. At the mere tone of my voice, he would kneel down that I might mount or alight with the greater ease. If I chanced to let fall my handkerchief or my prayer-book, or the bridle slipped from my hand, he would instantly stop of his own accord till I had got hold again of the latter, or till some one reached to me what I had dropped. Wishing to return expeditiously

from the sea-shore to my caravan, I urged him more than usual ; he turned his head towards me and looked at me with a faint cry, as if to apprise me that we had still a great way to go, and that if I made him move any quicker, it would be impossible for him to carry me to my destination.

Morning and evening, when our camels were grouped around our caravan, I took pleasure in visiting and caressing them ; but I always returned in preference to my white dromedary which lay at the door of my tent. I deputed to no other the care of feeding this faithful companion of my pilgrimage : it was I who gave him from time to time some of the beans which I had brought expressly for him ; he knew my voice, and seemed to understand me ; I paid him particular attention, which he remarked, and for which he appeared grateful. Though he could endure thirst much longer than myself, I frequently shared my water with him, heedless of the difficulty of obtaining a fresh supply. He would drink, looking at me with eyes in which I fancied that I could discover a sort of thankfulness. I have parted from him, and I must confess with regret ; because no animal has reminded or ever will remind me more forcibly of the infinite goodness of God to man — that goodness which the philosopher, *without faith, without hope, without charity*, stupidly attributes to Nature.

LETTER LV.

JOURNEY TO UPPER EGYPT—RETURN — COLONEL PROKESCH — VISIT TO
MEHEMET ALI—EXECUTIONERS — MASSACRE OF THE MAMELUKES —
MOSQUES OF CAIRO — THE KORAN — CORPUS CHRISTI DAY.

Cairo, June 8, 1833.

I have just come back from a long and arduous journey, a journey wholly unforeseen, and of which I had no thoughts when I last wrote to you. I have come from the extremities of Upper Egypt, the limits of the ancient Roman empire. I have been to the first cataract of the great river, and my farthest steps have touched Nubia. Twenty times during this excursion I have wished to write to you ; twenty times I have taken up the pen, and as often my recollection of the absolute impossibility of transmitting my despatches to you has caused me to lay it down again.

On my return from Sinai, the essential object of my pilgrimage was fulfilled : I had seen the places dear to my faith, and my heart was satisfied. I then thought only of returning to Europe with my recollections, and with all the precious memorials for Christian piety that I had been able to acquire, and of repairing to my monastery to bury myself there once more. I had even begun to make preparations for my departure, when an unexpected circumstance caused me to suspend them, and to defer the execution of my intentions.

The Count d'Estourmel was here for a few days, with Messieurs de Gontaut, his nephews. Having travelled through Greece and part of Asia Minor, these gentlemen were making arrangements for visiting Upper Egypt :

they proposed to me to accompany them, and urged me to do so by all the motives that extreme good-nature, I might even say friendship, could suggest. I hesitated at first. A pilgrim, a monk, unable at my age to cast a look upon the future, without thinking of the necessity of making good use of the little time that is reserved for me in the secret decrees of Providence, in order to prepare myself for another journey, whose success, of infinitely greater importance, can alone ensure the felicity to which I aspire ; for my participation in the above-mentioned plan, I could plead nothing but the gratification of a curiosity perfectly reasonable in itself, to be sure, but perhaps less legitimate for me than for persons who have not entirely broken with the world, or bidden it farewell for ever. These considerations raised scruples in my mind. Some pains were taken to remove them, and, I must acknowledge, successfully. With a superior understanding and extensive attainments, M. d'Estourmel combines the most amiable manners and exemplary piety. He remarked that the opportunity was such as could never offer again ; he represented that Thebais, so interesting to the philosophic inquirer, is not less so to the Christian ; that it reminds us of the heroes of Christianity not less than of those of the pagan religions, and of our great God not less than of the absurd divinities of Egypt. I suffered myself to be persuaded, and went.

I have just visited with him those Egyptian cities, most of which, after filling the pagan world with the renown of their grandeur, their power, their wisdom, and their arts, seemed doomed to oblivion, till modern Science

went to awaken their glory, slumbering under the dust of ages. Dendera, Thebes, Carnac, Luxor, Esné, Edfou, Hermontis, Ombos, Syene, the Isle of Philoe, &c. have successively shown to me all that is curious, extraordinary, and magnificent, discovered in our days by the most celebrated European travellers in such of their monuments as Time has respected, or the relics of which it has spared. I have closely surveyed their astonishing ruins, the gigantic master-pieces of their architecture, those colossal figures, those obelisks, those palaces, those temples, those chapels, those lofty walls covered with inscriptions, basso-relievos, and paintings, those columns, those sphynxes, those hypogeums, those tombs, that bespeak conceptions and efforts, of which one would not conceive either the genius or the strength of man to be capable. I have lodged, I have taken my meals, I have slept, in those subterraneous halls, beneath those sepulchral vaults where lay the Pharaohs—those Pharaohs, who sought by all the means which their power afforded to ensure the inviolability of their tombs, and whose tombs were, nevertheless, violated by greedy hands, which rummaged their embalmed bowels in search of hoarded gold, and then scattered abroad their mutilated relics. I have even saluted that famed statue of Memnon, so celebrated in history : I seated myself before sunrise on his enormous knees, but in vain I solicited from him some of those harmonious sounds, which, according to the ancient traditions, issued from his granite bosom ; and which, as Tacitus relates, were heard by Germanicus.

My eyes, too, have wandered afar over those deserts, which, in the first ages of the Church and even in the

time of the persecutions, were peopled with cenobites and anchorets — over those deserts where dwelt, in fasting, in mortification, in the austerities of the severest penance, the Pauls, the Hilarions, the Macariuses, the Pachomiuses, and their innumerable disciples. I have penetrated into some of those caves, hollowed out here and there, some by nature, others by the hands of the recluses, and which were so many cells for them. I have contemplated, with a satisfaction mingled with sadness, those ruins of monasteries and of ancient churches ; and especially those arid sands, those rocks, the vast theatre whither thousands of Christians repaired, to devote long years of their life to the meditation of celestial things, to pray to God, to combat their passions, to purify their hearts, and to exhibit to the most superstitious people on the face of the earth the wonderful sacrifices, and the virtues which the true religion is capable of inspiring.

My intention, let me tell you at once, is not to enter here into details, and to load this letter with long descriptions too foreign to my subject. That task belongs essentially to those who write for science, and it has been already performed by men of such eminent merit, that it will henceforward be difficult to surpass, perhaps even to equal, them. Whenever you wish to acquire any thing like a correct knowledge of Upper Egypt, turn to the works of the *savants* who accompanied the French expedition to the East ; consult the publications of a Jomard, a Denon, a Champollion, and there you will find unrolled the vast picture of the things which I have seen and admired.

Nevertheless, my dear Charles, I shall not quit this

subject without declaring to you that, great as has been my admiration, the impression that I have most suddenly and most strongly felt, that which most frequently recurred at the sight of the Egyptian temples, was an impression of pain, of grief, of pity, produced by the strange contrast between the magnificence, the majesty, of those incomparable edifices, and the vanity, the nothingness, of the absurd Gods to whom they were erected, and who were adored in them.

The Egyptian who appears so great, when you see him only in his mightiest works, appears but what he is—petty, abject, stupid—when considered in the objects of the worship to which those works belong. No nation disparaged the Deity more; none so disgraced and degraded humanity. More superstitious than the others, it was not content with prostituting its worship to certain idols common to several nations, to Apollo, to Mercury, to Bacchus, to the impure goddess; with it the ibis, the ichneumon, the bull, the crocodile, the dog, the cat, a multitude of land or aquatic animals, according to Lucian and Juvenal, plants and culinary vegetables, came in for their share of divine honours. This extravagance, so deplorable, so criminal in the sight of him who has the happiness to know the true God, and feels how much it must offend Him—this extravagance, I say, was carried to such a length as to be ridiculed by the world, though itself idolatrous, and, what is particularly worthy of remark, pagan philosophy, less indifferent or less exclusively infatuated with the arts than that of our age, formed its judgment of the Egyptians, not so much from

their monuments as from the disgraceful absurdities of their superstitions.

On my return to Cairo, I received testimonies of kindness and friendship the more cordial, because a report had been circulated that I had fallen dangerously ill at Thebes. The good Franciscan Fathers, with whom I continued to lodge, vied with each other in their inquiries concerning me, and in the expression of their joy at my safe return. The catholic clergy, the vice-consul of Austria, and most of the consuls of the other nations,* came to congratulate me, and to lavish upon me demonstrations of interest which deeply affected me. I could not have had a more agreeable surprise than to meet with colonel Chevalier von Prokesch, distinguished as a soldier, a diplomatist, and an author; whose German work, entitled "Recollections of Egypt and Asia Minor," has been extremely useful to me. The colonel is come to Egypt on a particular mission from the emperor of Austria to the viceroy; and to this fortunate circumstance for me I am indebted for the pleasure of making his acquaintance.

My satisfaction was somewhat disturbed by the too speedy departure of M. d'Estourmel. I had flattered myself that his stay would be prolonged till I could accompany him on his return to Europe. The daily intercourse which had subsisted between us for nearly two months, his amiable disposition, and an entire conformity

* The vice-consul of France, whose politeness to me I cannot sufficiently acknowledge, was desirous that I should take with me a memento of him. He has made me a present of a superb crocodile, about nine feet in length, which he killed himself in Upper Egypt.

of sentiments and ideas, had endeared him to me. I parted from him with regret.

Mehemet Ali was at Cairo. I went, in the first days, accompanied by the Austrian vice-consul, to pay my respects to him. He had just concluded peace with the sublime Porte. His palace was crowded by a multitude of people, among whom were to be seen distinguished personages. As soon as he perceived me, he made a sign that I should be permitted to approach. After I had made my obeisance, he invited me, as at the time of my first visit, to sit down by his side. I complimented him on the advantageous peace which he had obtained, and on the increase and consolidation of his power, and reminded him of my prediction on that subject. He appeared to recollect it, and thanked me, but with a look which betrayed dissatisfaction, and a kind of embarrassment. It was easy for me to judge that this peace was not sufficient for his ambition, that the idea of getting to Constantinople haunted him and embittered his life.

As we were leaving the court of the palace, Mons. B., who had joined us, said to me in a very low and mysterious tone : “ Did you observe the two men sitting in a little niche, yonder, quite close to the door ? ” — “ No,” I replied, and, without waiting for any explanation, I abruptly turned back. I saw, in fact, two Arabs, one of whom appeared to be about fifty years of age, and the other twenty-five. Both were smoking gravely and in silence, with their eyes fixed on the staircase leading to the apartment in which his Highness was. I stopped a moment to survey them ; they perceived it, and, without

saying a word, darted at me a terrible look. I hastened back to Mons. B., and begged him to inform me who were these two men. "They are the executioners," said he, "waiting to be called. There was a time," he continued, "when their services were very frequently required. But Mehemet Ali, more circumspect and less greedy of vengeance, has left them more leisure since the slaughter of the Mamelukes, by which he horribly signalized the first years of his power."

We were on the very spot where that frightful carnage took place. Mons. B. described to me its most deplorable and bloody scenes. Though well acquainted with some of them, I could not listen to him without shuddering. One shudders, too, at the mere thought of the consequences to be anticipated from such perfidy and cruelty, if ever the power of him who has not been ashamed to sully himself by them should begin to totter.

It is impossible, my friend, that so atrocious an event, with the rumour of which Europe rang from one extremity to the other, can be absolutely unknown to you; but perhaps you may not be acquainted with the details of it. If you would form a just idea of the character of the Mussulman hero, whose character and government certain persons seem to think it their duty to extol, read those which M. Mangin, an impartial writer, has been at great pains to collect.

I have not yet said any thing concerning the numerous mosques at Cairo: I intended to have noticed them before my departure for Sinai, but time did not permit me. The city contains nearly four hundred, some of which are remarkably elegant and beautiful, but they

are almost all in a dilapidated state. Their cupolas and minarets give them an appearance at once noble and graceful. The largest and most magnificent date from the ninth century, and even earlier. The most remarkable are the mosque of El Azbar, that of El Hakem, and more especially those of Hassan and Tholoun, which surpass all the others in magnitude, regularity of architecture, and the delicacy of their decorations. The last, which is compared with the finest buildings of this kind at Constantinople, is falling to ruin, and there seems to be no thought of repairing it. Wishing to see the interior of some of them, I visited three, last week, in company with M. Prokesch and five or six foreigners: we were conducted by government *carvas*.* It is not an easy matter for a foreigner to gain admission into a mosque, especially at the hours of prayer. None is allowed to enter but in the Turkish dress, and without shoes: we were obliged to conform to the law. Our *carvas* strongly recommended to us to keep absolute silence, lest our language should betray and compromise us. On two occasions our disguise and our precautions were completely successful: we had time not only to admire the porticoes, the arcades, the columns, the galleries, the sculptures, but also to observe the motions and the attitudes of the congregation during prayers. We saw neither altars, nor images, nor figures, nor any of those religious signs which betoken Christian churches. These Mahomet most expressly prohibits. The men

* The *carvas* are Turks, who now supply the place of the janissaries. Each of the consuls has several of them. Mahomet, whom I have continually called my *janissary*, was a *carva*.

were below, the women in the galleries, kneeling upon carpets: some were squatting on their heels, turning their heads every now and then to the right and to the left, and that, as I was told, to salute the Prophet. The iman pronounced the prayer, which the people repeated, nearly word for word, and accompanied with inclinations and prostrations, the number of which is fixed for each exercise.

In the largest mosque, which we visited last, an immense congregation of the faithful was assembled. No sooner had we entered than our conductors became alarmed at the marked attention which our presence all at once excited. They earnestly besought us to retire, and we complied, not so much for fear of what might befall ourselves, but to avoid bringing them into the danger which they seemed so much to dread on their own account.

You must not conclude from this circumstance that Mussulman fanaticism is still what it was some centuries ago, and what the Koran would have it to be:* that would be a mistake. Fanaticism prevails not to such a degree except in the ardent votaries of Islamism, whose number is daily decreasing, and among the lowest class of the people. The intercourse of Europeans with Egypt having become extremely frequent, is constantly tending to diminish its violence, and I may even add that the Crescent is on the wane. The religious law of Mahomet, of which the sophists of the 18th century set themselves

* "Fight against the unbelievers," says the Koran, "till all false religions are exterminated. Put them to death; spare them not; and when you have thinned their number by dint of slaughter, reduce the rest to slavery, and crush them by tributes." See chapters 8, 9, and 47.

up for apologists, which the hot-headed revolutionists of France, in 1793, extolled as superior to Christianity, and which some modern travellers have not blushed to declare *reasonable*, has in itself no principle, no character of durability. It cannot establish itself but by the sword, which lent its force to the imposture; it cannot maintain itself but by the oppression, and especially by the ignorance, to which it dooms its votaries: now that ignorance is clearing away, though but slowly, and it will become more and more impossible to bring back men's minds to it. So long as the prohibition to engage in literary and philosophical studies was strictly observed, Islamism could not but be formidable. Now, letters and philosophy are penetrating on all sides into the East; and already unequivocal signs are manifesting themselves as the forerunners of a moral revolution which must change its aspect. It is not yet one hundred years since the Mussulmans, princes and people, had a horror of printing, and proscribed all our books, from the apprehension that some of them might introduce our ideas and shake the faith in the Prophet. At the present day, our books, nay, our newspapers, are imported, circulated, and find numerous readers. With the intellectual activity which agitates and hurries on nations, with that universal greediness, that thirst of wealth, which torments mankind, with that continual series of commercial enterprises and speculations, whose importance and extent are incessantly giving rise to new relations, and multiplying them to infinity, how would it be possible to prevent that communication of ideas, that action of books whose influence upon religious creeds is felt even when

treating of matters the most foreign to such subjects ! And if in Mahometanism, to say nothing of the absurdity of some of its most mischievous dogmas, there were nothing but that shameful morality of corrupted hearts, which, as it has been remarked a thousand times, always supposes that two persons of different sexes cannot be together, or look at one another, without meditating crime ; if, in this morality, there were nothing more than polygamy, the captivity of women, the right to shut them up, to repudiate them upon the slightest pretext, or without any pretext whatever ; the right to make eunuchs, the right to doom the conquered, men, women, and children to slavery ; the right to use, to abuse, them as beasts of burden and instruments of lasciviousness ; if, lastly, this morality merely served to consecrate the despotism of the sovereign, established and proclaimed absolute master of the property, the liberty, the life of all—a despotism which, with its horrible consequences, springs from the Koran, according to the confession of Volney himself, as a natural and inevitable effect—I ask you, my dear Charles, can such a state of things, such doctrines, or, to speak more correctly, such barbarism, subsist long without the conditions which have upheld it ? can it long withstand the elements of ruin which have crept into it, develop themselves in its bosom, and act the more efficaciously, inasmuch as the result which they are destined to produce is much less in the combinations and the will of man than in the dispositions of Providence ?

The Franciscan Fathers have celebrated Corpus Christi day with all the pomp that can accompany so holy and

so august a ceremony in an infidel land. The solemn procession took place in the interior of the convent, where an altar was erected and decorated with the most elegant simplicity. Several catholics attended it, and walked with profound devotion after the clergy. After the last benediction, which concluded the service, as I thought, what was my surprise, and what pleasure it gave me, to hear the choir sing the *Domine salvum fac imperatorem* ! This is a tribute of gratitude which the good Fathers pay with all their hearts to our beloved sovereign, under whose protection the monastery is placed. I deemed myself happy to be able to mingle my voice with their's, and I joined with my whole soul in their prayers, beseeching the Lord to hear us whenever we invoked him in behalf of the best of princes.

Farewell, my dear friend. A few days longer to arrange my affairs, and to visit, if possible, one or two establishments that I wish to see, and then I shall hasten my return to Europe. My next letter will probably be dated from Alexandria.

LETTER LVI.

RETURN TO ALEXANDRIA—TRAVELLING PLANS—CARDINALS GREGORIO
AND PEDICINI—INDISCRETION—FAREWELL VISIT TO MEHEMET ALI
—MUMMY—CROCODILE.

Alexandria, June 16, 1833.

I have been in Alexandria ever since last week, my dear friend. After an absence of two years and long peregrinations, it is a pleasing thought to me that I am approaching Switzerland, and returning to brethren

whose exile I have shared, with whom I have passed days of such perfect and pure tranquillity. Great as is the distance that yet parts me from them, it sometimes seems as though I were already in their midst: but as yet I know not when the moment that shall crown my wishes will arrive. I am impatiently waiting for some vessel bound to Malta, where I expect to perform quarantine. Thence, if nothing happens to thwart my plans, I shall go to Naples, and then to Rome, whence I shall proceed by the shortest route to St. Urban, where I hope to learn tidings of our poor exiles.

The motive which determines me to visit the capital of the Christian world, is to lay at the feet of the sovereign pontiff the homage of my profound veneration and my warm gratitude for the touching kindness with which his Holiness complied with the requests that I ventured to make to him previously to setting out on my pilgrimage, and for the high protection which he has condescended to afford me. My heart also feels a longing to see once more those members of the sacred college with whom I was a prisoner in the castle of Vincennes, and who are yet living, the cardinals Gregorio and Pedicini, men eminently distinguished for learning and piety, who gloriously confessed the faith when in fetters, and whose noble firmness and sublime resignation merited the admiration not only of the catholic church, but even of those who do not belong to it. Seized unjustly and contrary to the law of nations, in a foreign territory, by the order of him to whose yoke France was then subject, and thrown into the same prison with these illustrious captives, to the example of their virtues I owed the courage to bear as a Christian

the iniquity to which, like them, I was a victim. They honoured me with their friendship, and I wish them to learn from my own lips, if possible, how religiously I have preserved the remembrance of it.*

The day before yesterday, I played a prank which might have cost me dear. Colonel Prokesch, who, after I had left Cairo, came to this city to wait for a vessel to take him to Trieste, was to sail in an Austrian brig. I had accompanied him on board. The vessel had still several things to take in; and the captain assured me that he should not leave the harbour before six in the morning. I retired, promising the colonel and his aide-de-camp, captain Kudriaffsky, to come back and bid them farewell; and I took the precaution to retain a boat for the purpose.

In performance of my promise, I repaired very early next morning to the harbour with M. Babich, chief dra-

* At the moment when I was writing this, I had no doubt that cardinal Pedicini was the same person as the abbé Cosimo Pedicini, an ecclesiastic of extraordinary merit, who was my fellow-prisoner at Vincennes. To the kindness of one of the most respectable members of the sacred college, I am indebted for the information that this is a mistake. The cardinal never was in France. The abbé Cosimo Pedicini, my companion in misfortune, was secretary to cardinal Pacca, with whom he continued till his death.

Among the distinguished persons whose captivity I shared, and whom I should have been very sorry not to meet with, had it been possible for me to go to Rome as I intended, I shall here mention with a deep feeling of respect and gratitude the illustrious and venerable Father Fontana, since created cardinal by Leo XII., and taken from the Church in 1822. It was chiefly in my conversations with this learned and holy ecclesiastic that I learned to know all the importance of the destinies of man. It was principally the example of his virtues and the lessons of his wisdom which made me feel the nothingness of all that I had till then been pursuing, and seriously turn my thoughts to the only important things, those of eternity.

goman of the consulate. But, to our great surprise, the brig was already at sea : we saw her sailing in the offing. There was but little wind, and that unfavourable : I had no doubt that by rowing lustily we should soon overtake her. The boatmen were of a different opinion. They made some remonstrances, but to no purpose ; I turned a deaf ear to them, promised a handsome gratuity, and away we went.

The boat, which belonged to a vessel from Trieste, was small, but manned by four stout seamen. Induced by my promises, they rowed with all their might : it soon fell quite calm, and in a few hours we found ourselves alongside the brig, which had perceived us. M. von Prokesch, his aide-de-camp, and the crew, were lost in astonishment. " I promised," said I to the good colonel, " that I would come and take leave of you. You see that I am a man of my word." He thanked me with emotion. " But," added he, " it is a very great imprudence to come so far, and it might involve you in serious danger." And, fearing lest the calm should not last till I could reach Alexandria, he begged me to hasten my return.

Standing up in my boat, I continued for a long time to salute with my hand or my handkerchief those excellent officers with whom I had passed such agreeable hours. Then, when I could no longer see them, came reflexions on the freak that I had played. Did it become a monk of La Trappe ? As an excuse for it, I repeated on this occasion what I had said to myself on a hundred others, that the religious life acts more upon the heart than upon the head, and that it almost always leaves to the mind the character which it has received from Nature.

At any rate, I am an evidence that this is sometimes the case. Notwithstanding my age and my toils, I am as brisk as I was at thirty; and as to the dangers that I have defied in my time, what you have just read is only a repetition of what I am going to relate to you.

Their majesties the king and queen of Naples had just married their daughter Christina to the duke of Aosta, afterwards king of Sardinia, who died a few years since. The situation of the royal family at that time prevented it from giving any splendid festivities on the occasion: but, on the day that the august couple were united, the queen, whose spirit was generous and great, married and portioned one hundred young women.

The moment of parting was painful. The queen was exceedingly affected; and the princess Maria Amelia, in particular, who had never before been separated from her sister, and loved her dearly, appeared inconsolable. The good king had but a single man-of-war left — the *Tancred*. In this ship the royal couple embarked for Cagliari. Two English frigates accompanied her.

The day after they had sailed, having called upon the queen, I found her at her window, watching with a telescope the ship that was conveying two persons so dear to her heart. When I had the honour to approach her, “Look,” said her majesty, “look! how my children must suffer!” The sea was, in fact, very rough, and the *Tancred* old and a bad sailer.

No sooner had I left the princess than I drove off to the dockyard. With great difficulty and by the offer of a large reward, I hired six men and a boat, and off we instantly went to the *Tancred*. It was not till the first

wave broke over us that I recollected that I was in a court-dress,* and that too in the Hungarian fashion, that is to say, booted and spurred and with a sword by my side. Conceive my vexation, my dear Charles, on perceiving that I was without cloak; for my chivalrous costume—forgive the expression—and my arms were of little use against the assault of the element. We had not been a quarter of an hour at sea before I heard one of the men say to his comrade: *O m'inganno molto, o siamo qui sette matti*—"I am greatly mistaken if we are not seven madmen." I affected not to understand him.

After prodigious efforts we approached the ship, whose deck was covered with people. But how was I to get on board? My boat, sometimes high, sometimes low, according to the motion of the waves, was liable to be dashed against the *Tancred*, and in that case we must be lost. At length, however, I was upon the deck. I was surrounded, and made known that the baron de Geramb had come to inquire how their royal highnesses did. I begged permission to pay my respects to them, and was immediately introduced. The princess was in bed, suffering severely from sea-sickness: the prince and two ladies, seated by her, appeared much fatigued. "Her majesty," said I to their highnesses, "is very anxious to learn how you are, and I am come to inquire, that I may let her know." The prince and princess expressed their thanks, and said many gracious and flattering things. "We cannot allow you to leave us in such dreadful weather," they added; "it would be too dan-

* The author was then chamberlain to the emperor of Austria.

gerous. You shall come with us to Cagliari, whence you may return safely in our ship or in one of the English frigates." I thanked their royal highnesses in my turn, and represented that, as nobody knew where I was, my absence would occasion painful anxiety, especially to my son; and besides, the object of my voyage, which was to tranquillize the queen, would be unaccomplished. Upon these representations they consented to my return.

I reached Palermo, after luckily escaping more than one danger, but drenched to the skin. Taking no more time than was required to change my clothes, I hastened to give the queen intelligence of her august children. Her majesty already knew where I had been. Closely watching the *Tancred*, she had perceived the boat, and had no doubt that I was in it. After a few rebukes for my temerity, she condescended to say: "I cannot help scolding you, my dear Geramb; but be assured that I appreciate this new pledge of your attachment,* and that I shall never forget it."

Among the curiosities that I have brought from Cairo, besides the crocodile, which I have already mentioned, there is a superb mummy. I intend to take it on board with me, but it is not certain that I shall be able to do so. In this particular, seamen are so superstitious that scarcely one captain could be found in a hundred who would allow it to be shipped. In case of unfavourable weather, a contrary wind, a storm, the mummy would be the cause of it; the mummy would have drawn down

* In 1805 and 1806, the author commanded in Austria a volunteer corps raised at his expence, which bore the name of the empress Maria Theresa, daughter of the queen of Naples.

the curse of Heaven. It must be thrown overboard : by keeping it, you would be sure to bring upon the vessel fresh and perhaps irreparable calamities.

Mehemet Ali left his capital almost at the same time that I did. Being informed of his arrival here, I thought that I could not avoid paying him a farewell visit. I went yesterday to his palace. Rumour had already told him of my crocodile and my mummy : he made them for a moment the topic of conversation. “ Your highness,” said I, laughing, “ I am persuaded that a traveller returning from Egypt cannot decently show his face in Europe without a mummy in one hand and a crocodile in the other.” This piece of pleasantry tickled him much, and gave me reason to suspect that he is pleased to see us natives of the West attach so much value to Egyptian *relics*.

Our consul-general, the excellent chevalier Acerbi, has not ceased to load me with civilities and kindness. He has placed at my disposal his library, and his collections of minerals and shells, which are extremely beautiful. My most agreeable moments are spent in examining them, especially when I can at the same time profit by the instructive conversation of the consul—a pleasure which business does not allow him to afford me so frequently as I could wish.

P. S. At length an opportunity offers for Malta : it is a Maltese brigantine, called Le Coradino, from Constantinople. She will, probably, sail in less than a fortnight.

LETTER LVII.

PASSAGE FROM ALEXANDRIA TO MALTA—QUARANTINE—BISHOP OF MALTA—ST. PAUL—HISTORY OF MALTA—KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM—DISSOLUTION OF THE ORDER—PRUDENCE OF THE ENGLISH AT MALTA—GENERAL PONSONBY—MARQUIS OF HASTINGS—MR. FRERE—REMARKABLE OBJECTS AT MALTA.

Malta, September 25th, 1833.

I left Alexandria, my dear Charles, on the 5th of July at nine in the morning, after bidding adieu to some friends, and pressing to my heart the excellent chevalier Acerbi, whom I shall never forget.

Our captain and crew were but sorry seamen. Luckily, we had on board M. Besson, a Frenchman, *chef d'escadre* in the service of Mehemet Ali, the same who undertook to convey Bonaparte to America after his defeat at Waterloo. The advice of this officer, a very clever and not less amiable man, was of the greatest utility to us during the passage.

On the thirtieth day we came to an anchor in the harbour of Malta, and on the following day I entered the lazaretto. The building appropriated to this purpose is magnificent: it is a house formerly belonging to the Order. According to the regulations, I was to perform quarantine for twenty-one days: I obtained a reduction of it to twenty. During this kind of imprisonment, which seemed very tedious, I had the honour to receive several visits from the Austrian consul, the chief vicar-general, and the private secretary of the bishop of Malta, archbishop of Corfu, a prelate of great piety and distinguished merit, to whom I was recommended by a letter from the sacred congregation. The presence and

the conversation of those gentlemen enabled me to await more patiently the day when I should be set at liberty. At length it arrived. The secretary came in the bishop's carriage to fetch me, and took me forthwith to the episcopal palace. I begged permission first to pass a moment in the chapel, to thank God for our prosperous voyage, and then went to pay my respects to the bishop, who had had the attention to invite me to dinner, and to ask the Austrian consul and a large party of the clergy and nobility to meet me. The venerable prelate received me with extreme kindness, and loaded me with civilities. He took pleasure in inquiring the particulars of the long pilgrimage which I had just completed, and appeared to feel great interest in them. An apartment had been prepared for me by his direction at the monastery of the barefooted Carmelites. When I was retiring, he begged me in the most amiable manner to remember that his palace and carriage were at my disposal, and directed a person to accompany me to the good Fathers, where a truly cordial and paternal welcome awaited me.

Malta, which the ancients called Melita, on account of the abundance and the excellence of the honey produced there, was originally but an almost bare rock, inhabited by barbarians. After it had belonged to the Carthaginians, it fell under the dominion of the Romans, and was in their possession at the birth of Christ. It is celebrated in the history of Christianity, to which it was converted about the third year of the reign of Nero, for the preaching and the miracles of St. Paul, who, having been cast on its shore by shipwreck, was taken by a centurion to Rome to be there tried:—

“And when they were escaped,” says St. Luke, “then they knew that the island was called Melita.

“And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness : for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

“And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened upon his hand.

“And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

“And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

“Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly : but, after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

“In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and lodged us three days courteously.

“And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux : to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

“So, when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came and were healed :

“Who also honoured us with many honours ; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.” (Acts xxviii. 1—10.)

Historians are not agreed as to the point where the great apostle landed; but an immemorial tradition in the country relates that it was on a neck of land on the north coast, which the people still visit with reverence, and which is habitually denominated *Calle* of St. Paul.

According to the same tradition, this Publius, who in the Acts of the Apostles is called the chief man of the island, was the Roman governor. He became not merely a disciple of the faith, but bishop of Malta, and the house in which he dwelt, converted into a church, was consecrated for divine worship.

From the Roman dominion Malta passed successively under that of the Goths, the Saracens, and the counts and kings of Sicily, till at length in 1540 it devolved, by the cession of Charles V., to the knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. It thenceforward acquired an importance with which were connected the highest interests of European civilization: it was the bulwark of Christendom. Plunged in a stupid indifference, how many persons are there at this day, who know not that the waves of Mahometanism, which threatened so long to overwhelm the West, were broken by the rocks of Malta, defended by its brave knights, and that if our Europe, so smitten with the charms of liberty and independence, is not now ignominiously dragging the chains of slavery under the yoke of some sultan, it is owing, in part, at least, to those heroes of the faith, to those pious warriors, whose institution — so it was decreed by Providence — sprang up in an hospital, amidst paupers, and in the city where Christ, the supreme model of devotedness, died for the salvation of mankind.

“Shut up at first in an hospital,” says their most illustrious historian, Vertot, “notwithstanding the arduous and humiliating attendance on the poor and the sick, finding in themselves sufficient zeal and strength to take arms against the declared enemies of the Christian name, they knew how to combine the different virtues of two opposite professions.

“The dress of these military monks was simple and modest: they reserved magnificence for the decoration of the altars. The pilgrims and the poor benefited by their frugal table; they went forth from the sick to engage in prayer, or to march against the enemies of the cross. That cross was at once their badge and their standard. There was no ambition in a martial body in which dignities were attained only by the path of virtue. Charity, the first of their obligations, and of the virtues of christianity, never forsook them even against the infidels, and what advantage soever they won in fight, satisfied with disarming those barbarians, they sought, even in the bosom of victory, only to convert them, or at least to disable them from injuring Christians.”

This, it is true, was the golden age of St. John of Jerusalem; but, though in the sequel they sometimes relaxed in the austere practice of so many different virtues, still, “notwithstanding this effect of human weakness,” continues the same historian, “I do not think that, among all the military orders scattered over different countries of Christendom, there is to be found one in which disinterestedness, purity of morals, and intrepidity in the greatest dangers—in which, I say, these virtues were so long honoured, and in which luxury

and the love of wealth and pleasure were introduced later."

If, in spite of the dissolute manners and the perverse doctrines that desolate the world, the faith which Malta received from St. Paul has maintained itself there in such force and such purity ; if there are still to be found in it numerous and magnificent churches, admirable institutions of charity, vast and superb public and private edifices ; if the same stratum of mould which covers the rock has at last yielded to the efforts of agriculture, furnished abundance of delicious fruits, and seconded the labours of industry ; if, with magazines, arsenals, and all the establishments requisite for the wants of a formidable naval force ; if, with excellent harbours, the whole island is defended by fortifications which render it impregnable unless by perfidy and treachery — to whom is due the honour of all this, if not to that long series of warriors, among whom the Lille Adams and the Lavalettes had so many worthy successors, and who, almost all of them, to the last, nobly formed the advanced guard of Christian society, whenever it needed defending against its enemies !

The words *perfidy* and *treachery* have just fallen from my pen, and while writing them, I must confess, my dear friend, that I felt my heart heave with indignation. Yes, it was perfidy, the blackest perfidy, it was treachery, the most impious treachery, that, by surrendering the inexpugnable ramparts, which, since my arrival here, I have never ceased admiring, gave the death-blow to the illustrious Order that constituted its glory, and prepared for Catholic Malta the melancholy lot which is now its portion.

You know, my dear friend, who it was that in 1798 went forth at the head of forty thousand men, to conquer Egypt for a republic whose merciless destroyer Heaven decreed that he should one day be. He had the mission to surprise Malta by the way, and to take possession of it. Emissaries of the revolutionary propaganda had introduced themselves into the island, where they had secretly organized insurrection, and — O monstrous treason! — some of those who wore the cross on their breasts, whose most solemn oaths bound them to defend it, were engaged in their plot. In order to provoke revolt, and to reap the advantages anticipated from it, a pretext only was wanting: Bonaparte found it in the pretended necessity for revictualling his fleet and procuring water. He asked leave for his ships to enter the harbours all at once. He was told that they should be admitted only four at a time, and was referred to the stipulations on this head determined by treaties between the Christian powers. This answer was construed as an insult, and, nearly at the same moment, a council of war having been held, the troops received orders to land, with the precaution, however, to manifest only the intention of taking that which they had been unjustly refused. But perfidy soon threw off the mask: the factious showed themselves every where; the alarm and the confusion were general. The irresolution and want of concert of the heads of the Maltese government, taken unawares, the cries and the complaints of the people, who considered themselves as betrayed, the massacre of several faithful officers, all concurred to increase the disorder, and to hasten the final catastrophe. In three

days, without siege, without any other combat than a paltry fray with ignoble conspirators, or a few platoons of soldiers, the island surrendered. A disgraceful capitulation was signed ; the Order of Malta ceased to exist, and the faithful knights were compelled to seek elsewhere an asylum where they might hide their grief. The conqueror hastily plundered the treasury, the churches, the hospital, the palaces, the archives ; then, carrying with him such of the inhabitants and of the knights whose treachery had been most serviceable to him, he hurried away to the Nile, to brag to the Egyptians of the victory which he had just won over the enemies of the Crescent, and to proclaim that there is no God but God, and that Mahomet is his Prophet.

In reporting to his government the taking of Malta, Bonaparte wrote : — “ We have in the centre of the Mediterranean the strongest fortress in Europe, and it will cost those dear who shall dislodge us.” But scarcely had two years elapsed before the English were masters of it, without its having cost them much. It is still their's, and the treaty of 1814 between all the great powers seems to have ensured them a long and peaceable possession of the island.

It is painful, no doubt, to the Maltese people, so pious, so eminently catholic, not to live any longer under the paternal laws of an Order which, for three centuries, was its happiness and its glory ; more painful still, to be under the sway of a nation which has neither the same religion nor the same manners. How much less is it to be pitied, however, than when it was forced to wear the yoke imposed by men, belonging by birth to the same

faith, but corrupted and perverted by the degrading doctrines of modern impiety ! Though a deplorable schism separates England from the Romish church, the English government has the right spirit to grant to the catholic worship the same protection as if it were its own. It treats the bishop with respect and consideration ; it requires the civil and military authorities to pay the greatest honours to the high dignity with which he is invested ; and this respect, this consideration, this protection, are never manifested more conspicuously than when the difference of religions may have occasioned some disturbance, some irreverence.

A major having one day attempted to pass through a procession on horseback, the people requested him to stop : the major insisted on proceeding, and employed threats. He was ill used, and had well nigh fallen a victim to his obstinacy. No sooner had he escaped the danger than he hastened to lay his complaints before the governor, who, so far from thinking them just, severely condemned his conduct. The same officer became in the sequel a general, and afterwards governor of the island, and might have made some of the Maltese feel his vengeance. But he remembered his fault only to prevent his subordinates from committing the like, and showed not less zeal in protecting the catholic ceremonies, than he whose reproaches he had incurred.

The palace where the English governors reside is the very same which the grand-masters inhabited, and which they decorated with numerous ornaments, destined to perpetuate the glory of the Order — pictures, coats

of arms, statues, among others, that of the immortal Jean de Lavalette, who, in 1665, victoriously withstood eighty thousand Turks, commanded by Solyman; a statue unworthily overthrown and profaned, at the time of the invasion of the revolutionary barbarians, who forgot that the hero was a Frenchman.

The present governor is general Ponsonby, whom I knew in 1810 in Spain, where I served as general.

Among his predecessors, the one who has left the most honourable memorials at Malta is the marquis of Hastings, who died there a few years since. None has performed his functions in a more noble, more disinterested, more generous manner. He had previously been governor of India, and had there won general esteem. I was acquainted with him when he bore the name of Lord Moira : he honoured me with his warm friendship, and took pleasure in giving me proofs of it. I deemed it a duty owing to gratitude to visit his tomb, at which I tarried a considerable time.

Among the persons whom I had formerly known, and whom I found here, there are few that I have again met with so much pleasure as Mr. Frere, the English minister in Spain at the time of my sojourn in that country. Informed, at the very first moment, of my arrival, he lost no time in calling to see me, and he has continued ever since to give me the most amiable testimonies of his kindness. He is the father of the poor at Malta; it is his happiness to relieve, as far as lies in his power, all distresses, all misfortunes. His name is, consequently, revered by the inhabitants.

Malta, though fallen from the high rank in which it

was placed by its destination till the end of the last century, and, notwithstanding all the calamities that it has suffered, is still worthy of the whole attention of the traveller. Its numerous monuments, religious, civil, and military, its churches, most of them very remarkable, and among which is particularly distinguished that of St. John, the patron of the Order, its statues of St. Paul, which are met with in every quarter, its hospital, its aqueduct, a work worthy of the Romans, which conveys the water necessary for all purposes from one city to the other, its magnificent quays, its extensive dock-yard, its immense basins, the fortifications with which its soil is thickly set, will long attest what religion and glory have made of that rock where Lille-Adam, when he took possession of it, could scarcely find a house to dwell in, where the commanders and the knights had, at first, no other *alberghi* than a few wretched fishermen's huts. And to those to whom such great works shall fail to proclaim to what men they are due, the monuments of the dead will speak. Vandalism had not time to execute what it meditated, to scatter the dust of the sepulchres, to break the stones, or to efface the inscriptions. In the chapels are still to be found the tombs of the grand-masters, which record their piety, their valour, and their exploits. I have visited those august tombs, my dear friend, and I have dropped a tear upon them. I have mourned before them over Europe, so blind to her dearest interests, as to do with her own hand what the Mussulman had in vain tried for ages to effect, and to sanction the destruction of an establishment which was one of the firmest props of Christian society, its defence,

and the terror of its foes. A member of that Order, which a false wisdom allowed to perish, a knight of St. John of Jerusalem, I wished at least to carry with me the consolation of having pressed my lips to the venerable names recorded on those monuments, and deposited in the sanctuaries which contain them my homage, and my regret

While penning this effusion, my dear Charles, I have received letters, the contents of which derange all my plans. Painful as is to me the idea of renouncing the visit to Italy, and to Rome in particular, I am compelled to add that sacrifice to so many others. Important business calls me elsewhere, and will detain me for a time that I cannot yet calculate. If I can meet with a vessel for Genoa, I shall not fail to take advantage of it, and, unless fresh obstacles arise, I shall proceed immediately by the shortest route to the Abbey of St. Urban. If any thing can mitigate the pain of so unexpected a disappointment, it is the good news brought me by the same letters, that our monks of La Trappe are happily reinstated in the monastery of the Mount of Olives, from which they were cruelly expelled, that they are now living there in peace, and that I am permitted to return to my brethren.

LETTER LVIII.

DEPARTURE FROM MALTA — VIOLENT STORM — ARRIVAL AT MARSEILLES
— RETURN TO THE ABBEY OF ST. URBAN.

St. Urban, December 22nd, 1833.

Here I am, at the end of my pilgrimage, my dear friend ; I am at St. Urban.

I had reckoned upon obtaining a passage from Malta to Genoa, as I told you in my last letter. After waiting much longer than I liked for some ship, and waiting in vain, I changed my plan, and resolved to trust myself to the *Eagle*, an English brig, bound to Marseilles. The weather was terrible: we were forced to make our passage amidst continual storms. Never did I suffer so much at sea in my life. For twenty-four hours, at least, our situation appeared desperate: we gave ourselves up for lost. I could read in every face the apprehension of an imminent, inevitable catastrophe, and I shared the general anxiety. In this alarming state, the crew, harassed to death, exhibited a most affecting religious spectacle. Notwithstanding the incessant howling of the wind, notwithstanding the rapid succession of the lightning, notwithstanding the frequent bursts of thunder that rolled incessantly over our heads, evening prayer was not once interrupted. Never, in the silence and the seclusion of the convent, did I hear the anthems and the litanies of the blessed Virgin sung with greater fervour and devotion. The captain was the first to set the example. The tones of his powerful and sonorous voice, to which those of all the sailors unanimously responded—those strains animated by a lively faith and confidence—at times got the better of the din of the angry elements. Our prayers were heard: the vessel escaped all dangers, and reached her port without accident.

From Marseilles I pursued my way to St. Urban, travelling rapidly through France, wholly engrossed by my sorrow at not having it in my power to go to Rome. I had nothing to console myself but the thought that I was

going to rejoin those good monks who had before given me an asylum, and to return to my worthy and reverend Father, the abbé Dom Pierre, and my brethren, to receive new testimonies of their charity, and to derive from the daily example of their virtues new strength and new courage for worthily finishing the career of penitence, which the Lord has granted me the grace to pursue.

• At length, yesterday evening, the gates of the hospitable abbey opened to admit me. The community had been forewarned of my speedy return. I was impatiently expected; and welcomed with a lively but perfectly Christian joy, with that joy which is expressed by bursts of grateful piety, by eagerness to return thanks, by fervent prayers in behalf of him whom infinite goodness has deigned to protect, and to bring back without accident into the bosom of the religious family.

Farewell, my dear Charles! Mingle your thanksgivings with our's: remember me always before God, and be assured that in my retirement I shall never forget you. Christians love each other for eternity.

THE END.

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